

# Coping with Conflict and War

International conflicts can be both complex and sensitive issues for those directly and indirectly involved. Remember that it's crucial to adapt coping strategies to your specific circumstances, and always prioritize safety and well-being. Seek professional help when needed, and don't hesitate to reach out to local or international organizations providing support during times of conflict and war. Please see resources on the following page.

## Emotional and Psychological Support

Healing from the emotional scars of war is a complex and often challenging process. The experience of war can leave deep and lasting emotional wounds, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and a range of other psychological and emotional issues. Here are some tips that can help individuals and communities heal emotionally from the effects of war.

- **Talk About It.** Encourage open communication about the experiences and emotions associated with war. Sharing your story with trusted friends or family members can be therapeutic.
- **Support Groups.** Joining a support group for veterans or survivors of war can be tremendously helpful. Sharing experiences with others who have been through similar situations can provide a sense of camaraderie and understanding.
- **Artistic Expression.** Some individuals find healing through creative expression, such as art, music, or writing. These outlets can help process and express complex emotions.
- **Mindfulness and Meditation.** Mindfulness practices and meditation can help individuals manage stress and anxiety. These techniques teach individuals to stay in the present moment, rather than dwelling on past traumatic experiences.
- **Physical Health.** Taking care of your physical health can have a positive impact on emotional well-being. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and adequate sleep are all important.
- **Avoid Substance Misuse.** Many people turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with the emotional pain of war. However, this often leads to more problems. Avoiding substance misuse is essential for healing.
- **Establish a Routine.** Creating a daily routine can provide a sense of structure and stability. It helps to reduce the feelings of chaos and unpredictability that often accompany war-related trauma.
- **Set Realistic Goals.** Set small, achievable goals for yourself. Success in reaching these goals can boost self-esteem and motivation.
- **Cultural and Spiritual Healing.** Cultural or spiritual practices and rituals can be helpful for some individuals. These can provide a sense of meaning, belonging, and solace.

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- **Education and Advocacy.** Some people find healing by becoming advocates for veterans' rights or working to prevent future conflicts. This can give a sense of purpose and make one feel like they are contributing positively to society.
- **Forgiveness.** Healing often involves finding a way to forgive those responsible for the trauma, whether they are external enemies or even oneself. This is a deeply personal process and may not be achievable or appropriate in all cases.
- **Contact Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).** It's important to recognize that emotional wounds from war are real and they can be treated. Therapists, counselors, and mental health professionals with experience in trauma can provide invaluable support and guidance.

## Resources

If you are an American citizen overseas and find yourself caught up in a war, emergency, or other dangerous situation, it's crucial to seek help and assistance.

- **Contact the [nearest U.S. embassy or consulate](#)**, or call: 1-888-407-4747 (from the U.S. and Canada) or +1 202-501-4444 (from outside the United States). For more information, visit [Emergencies](#) and [What the Department of State Can and Can't Do in a Crisis](#).
- **Register with the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)** before traveling abroad and for security alerts.

Your safety is the top priority, and it's crucial to follow the guidance and instructions of the U.S. government and local authorities in such situations. Stay informed and keep connected with authorities and family, friends, or a support network. When the time is right, seek mental health support through your EAP.

- **[988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)** provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones. **If you or someone you know are in immediate danger of acting on suicidal thoughts, call 911.**
- **[VA Mental Health Services | Veterans Affairs \(VA\)](#)** Call: 877-927-8387 (TTY: 711) to talk with a fellow combat Veteran about your experiences, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- **[Disaster Distress Hotline](#)** Crisis counseling for people in emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. Call or text: 1-800-985-5990.
- **[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)** Call: 1-800-662-4357. This Helpline provides 24-hour free and confidential help. You can get treatment referral and information about mental health and drug or alcohol use disorders, prevention, and recovery in English and Spanish.

**This information is not intended to replace professional care. Please call your EAP if professional care is needed. The EAP offers assessment, counseling, and referral to appropriate resources.**

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