

COPING UNDER EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

- If everything else fails, tell the truth....
- Prepare ahead, in any way you can, for a situation you think will be tough;
- Seek out any completely trustworthy advisor (religious counselor, psychologist, etc.) and friends and family; build support relationships; find a relevant support group;
- Set a routine for yourself;
- Take action, even small actions; between action and passivity, choose action if possible;
- Plan in small bits, if necessary; get through the next week, the next day, the next hour;
- If possible, find something wonderful in your life (children, art, memories, music, fantasies, etc.);
- Is there anything you can do to create a BATNA (an escape, a fallback position)?
- Exercise, (dance, run, swim, bicycle or whatever), in such a way as to raise your heart-rate continuously for at least half an hour a day. Not only will you be fitter but you may raise your endorphin level to help deal with pain;
- If all else fails, practice denial.

LISTEN: Whatever happens, imagine that it is "data." Keep a journal or do any other kind of writing that reaffirms your discussion with yourself, drawing on your own values. These views and feelings may be shared with a few trusted others.

- For more information, see Robert Lifton's work on survivors of "brain washing."