Figure 1 Discussing the disaster experience

Does the patient wish to discuss the earthquake?

Yes
Listen to the account

Ready to discuss

No
Accept it and stay there. Do not go away.
Empathize and establish rapport
Reassure
Encourage by making a comment like:
‘Looks as if it is really difficult for you to talk about it’

Says a lot
Do not interrupt
Do not lose interest
If you need to stop, explain
Offer another appointment, if possible

Says little
Empathize
Recap on what he/she did say
Explain how discussion might help
Ask a related question

Still reluctant to discuss earthquake
Encourage to talk about something other than the experience directly
‘Is there anything else you would like to discuss?’
Offer another appointment, if possible

Becomes upset
Let the victim express distress
Acknowledge the difficulty
Sit in silence, if needed
Follow the lead to decide whether to continue or not
Ask if there is a question
Offer another appointment, if possible

Doesn’t become upset
Encourage to continue
Ask if there is a question
Offer another appointment, if possible