



Recovering from a Disaster or Emergency

CALM coping tips after a disaster or emergency

Connect. Having a network of positive relationships can help you cope during stressful times. Connecting with family and friends, either in person or through technology (e.g., phone, text, video chat), helps build hope and reminds you that you're not alone. Find ways to help others when you can and accept help from others when you need it.

Accept what's changed. Making sense and meaning out of a disaster can be hard. In the first year after a disaster, it's common for certain events such as birthdays, holidays, and a change of season to remind you about the things that have changed or what you've lost. Part of recovery and healing is recognizing these times and knowing it's okay to grieve.

Look for the positive. After a disaster or emergency, it can be hard to see things in a positive light. Making time for activities that you enjoy is important. Socialize or take part in spiritual activities, hobbies, or spend time in nature. Positive experiences can help you recover. When you feel positive emotions like appreciation or gratitude, your body produces chemicals and hormones that are good for you. This can help keep you physically and emotionally healthy.

Manage stress. Some stress is expected after a disaster. Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and body sensations. This can help you understand why you're feeling anxious or stressed. Stress-reducing activities like walking, yoga, meditation, and deep breathing can reduce tension and help your body produce chemicals and hormones that help you cope better.

Stress after a disaster or emergency

It's normal to have symptoms of stress. For some people, these symptoms don't appear until weeks or months after the event has happened. You might have more headaches, stomach problems, colds, or allergies than normal. Other common stress reactions to a disaster or emergency may include:

- feeling angry or irritable
- feeling sad or helpless
- trouble focusing, remembering, or making decisions
- muscle tension
- feeling anxious, scared, or on edge
- questioning your belief system
- trouble sleeping or staying asleep
- feeling guilt or shame

When to seek help

Many people recover on their own over time. Others might need extra support to help them recover. It's important to know when to ask for help. You may want to speak to your healthcare provider or a mental health professional if you are experiencing any of the following warning signs:

- having emotional reactions that are getting in the way of relationships, work, or other important activities
- feeling excessive guilt, shame, or blame
- avoiding or withdrawing from others
- feeling excessive anger, sadness, or hopelessness
- new or increased use of, tobacco, vaping, alcohol, or other drugs
- feeling excessive anxiety, fear, or panic
- feeling confused or disoriented
- thoughts of harming yourself or others

If you're having suicidal thoughts, go to the nearest emergency department or call 911 right away.

A sense of loss or feeling like you don't have control is common. People may not cope like they usually do. Be patient with yourself and others, it takes time to grieve, adjust, rebuild, and recover.

Take care of yourself

The stress from an unexpected disaster or emergency can have a big impact on your emotional and physical health. To help you cope and recover, there are many things you can do or keep doing. Here are few examples:

- Eat well. Good nutrition fuels the brain and body so you can learn, focus, and be active.
- Stay hydrated. Your body needs fluid for energy, memory, and focus. Try to avoid drinks with caffeine like pop, coffee, tea, and energy drinks, they can make you feel anxious or restless and affect your sleep.
- Be physically active every day. Regular physical activity increases your energy, improves your sleep, and helps you connect with others. A 15 minute walk outside, in any weather, can reduce stress and helps boosts your mood.
- Stretch. Gentle stretching exercises can relieve tension and help you feel relaxed and recharged.
- Get enough sleep. Lack of sleep can make you feel overwhelmed, which makes it harder to cope during stressful times.
- Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing. It can calm your nervous system and help you think more clearly.

Important Numbers Available 24/7
 Health Link
 811
 Addiction Helpline
 1-866-332-2322
 Mental Health Helpline
 1-877-303-2642



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