

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Taking Care of Your Emotional Health



The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), may be stressful for people and communities

[Learn more](#) about coping during COVID-19.



It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a disaster. Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time. Notice and accept how you feel. Taking care of your emotional health during an emergency will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family. Self-care during an emergency will help your long-term healing.

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment plans during an emergency and monitor for any new symptoms. Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)) website.

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Hotline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.
- People with deafness or hearing loss can use their preferred relay service to call 1-800-985-5990.

Take the following steps to cope with a disaster:

- **Take care of your body**– Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Learn more about [wellness strategies](#)  for mental health.
- **Connect with others**– Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships, and build a strong support system.
- **Take breaks**– Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths. Try to do activities you usually enjoy.
- **Stay informed**– When you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information like your local government authorities.
- **Avoid too much exposure to news**– Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do enjoyable activities and return to normal life as much as possible and check for updates between breaks.
- **Seek help when needed**– If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor, or contact the SAMHSA helpline at **1-800-985-5990**.

Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event



After a disaster, it is important to take care of your emotional health. Pay attention to how you and your family members are feeling and acting.

Taking care of your emotional health will help you think clearly and react to urgent needs to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Follow these tips to help you and your family recover or find support.

Steps to Care for Yourself

- **Take Care of Your Body**
 - › Try to eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and other drugs.
- **Connect**
 - › Share your feelings with a

How to Help Your Children

- **Talk with them.**
 - › Share age-appropriate information.
 - › Reassure them.
 - › Address rumors.
 - › Answer questions.
- **Set a good example by taking care of yourself.**

Download the fact sheet

[PDF - 224K]

[English Version](#) 

Look out for these common signs of distress:

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear.
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Anger or short-temper.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

If you experience these feelings or behaviors for several days in a row and are unable to carry out normal responsibilities because of them, [seek professional help](#) .

Additional Resources

- [Helping Children Cope](#)
- [Video: Coping with a Traumatic Event](#)
- [SAMHSA's Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery](#) 
- [Coping with Isolation and Quarantine \(SAMHSA\)](#) 
- [Psychological First Aid \(National Child Traumatic Stress Network\)](#) 



Take breaks and connect with others.

