

6. Know when to ask for help.

After a disaster you, or someone you care for, may:

- feel anxious, stressed, tired, sad, numb, lonely or worried
- have a hard time making decisions
- become easily frustrated
- argue more with family and friends
- eat or sleep too much or too little
- Distress reactions like these are normal and likely to go away over time.
- It is common for kids and teens to have these reactions, but they can occur in all ages.
- If a distress reaction lasts for longer than a few weeks, it is best to seek professional help.
- To get support, or help locating services in your area, call the Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990).



Living through a disaster can cause intense feelings. Stress and anxiety are common. Look inside for tips on how to cope after a disaster and where to find support.

For more information, visit www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov or call the Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990

Disaster Distress Helpline

PHONE: 1-800-985-5990
TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746
WEB: <http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAMHSA
www.samhsa.gov • 1-877-SAMHSA • 1-877-728-4373

This pamphlet is not a substitute for medical care. If you have questions or concerns, please talk with a health care provider.

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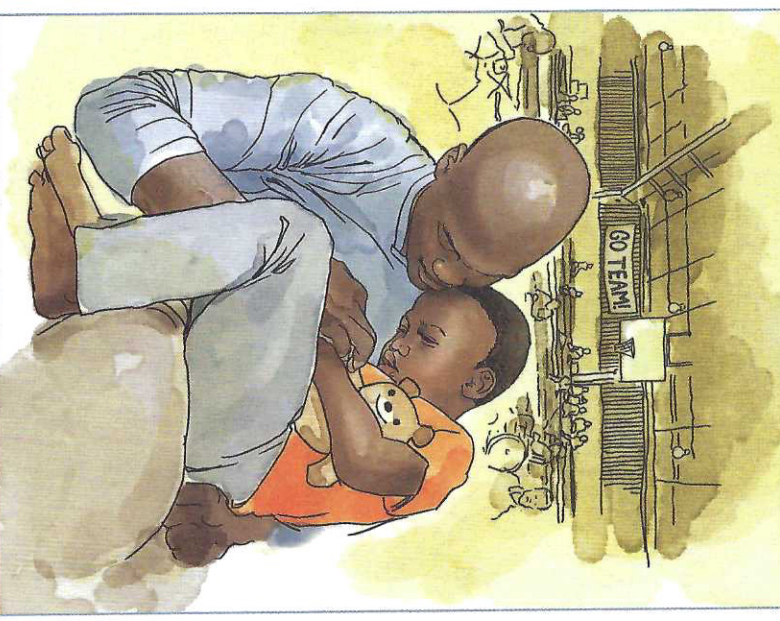
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After a Disaster

6 Tips for Coping with Stress



Natural disasters like floods or tornadoes can cause loss of life and damage communities. People affected often feel extreme distress. Man-made disasters, like incidents of mass violence, can also cause major distress for people and communities. Coping after a disaster can be tough. These tips may help.

1. Remember that you are not alone.

- A disaster can cause major upheaval in your daily life. Intense emotions are common.
- There are people who can help support you. It is okay to ask for help.
- You may need to rely on community services to find shelter, food, medical or emotional aid.



2. Focus on the basics.

- After a disaster, it may be easy to forget the importance of the simple things. Your body and mind will work best if you take care of these basics:
 - ✓ Eat healthy foods.
 - ✓ Exercise. Even short walks can help with stress.
 - ✓ Get good rest. Avoid caffeine late in the day.



3. Take steps to reduce anxiety.

- Take media breaks. Constantly checking social media, or watching news stories about the disaster may cause you to feel anxious or overwhelmed or even to relive the event.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Talk about your feelings with family or friends. Or, talk to a counselor or write in a journal.
- Talk to children. Young children may feel sad, worried, angry or scared. Let them know that it is okay to have these feelings.
- Try to set a normal routine. This is especially important for kids.

4. Be patient.

- There is no one way to think, feel or respond to a disaster. Everyone will deal with the intense emotions in their own way.
- Give yourself and those around you time to grieve and deal with the changes a disaster can bring.

5. Reach out.

- Living through a disaster may cause you to feel powerless or vulnerable. Reach out to friends, family and others in the community for support.
- Getting and giving support is a positive action that can help you regain feelings of connection and safety.
- Check in with your neighbors, especially if they are elderly, disabled or have special needs.
- Consider volunteering for local relief efforts.

