

Tips for the Public: Managing Stress After a Natural Disaster



Know the Signs of Stress¹

Your Behavior

- Increase or decrease in energy and activity levels.
- Increase in alcohol, tobacco or illegal drug use.
- Increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger or frequent arguing.
- Difficulty relaxing or sleeping.
- Frequent crying.
- Placing blame on other people for everything.
- Difficulty communicating or listening.
- Difficulty giving or accepting help.

Your Body

- Stomachaches or diarrhea.
- Headaches and other pains.
- Loss of appetite or overeating.
- Sweating or having chills.
- Tremors or muscle twitches.
- Being easily startled.

Your Emotions

- Anxious or fearful.
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun.
- Depression.
- Guilt.
- Anger.
- Wanting to be alone.
- Feeling heroic, euphoric or invulnerable.
- Not caring about anything.
- Overwhelming sadness.

Your Thinking

- Difficulty remembering things.
- Confusion.
- Difficulty thinking clearly and concentrating.
- Excessive worrying.
- Difficulty making decisions.

What You Should Know

When you are exposed to a disaster, you should know how it can affect your personal health and well-being. During stressful times, it is important to pay attention to your physical and mental health. Know the signs of stress and take action to stay healthy.

In the aftermath of a natural disaster, it is common to feel intense emotions and become overwhelmed.

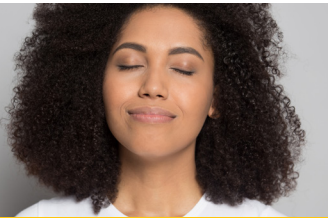
Learn how to cope with disasters and find other resources on the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Coping Tips** web page:

samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

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Know How to Relieve Stress¹

Keep Yourself Healthy

- Eat nutritious foods and drink water.
- Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine and alcohol.
- Do not use tobacco or illegal drugs.
- Get enough sleep and rest.
- Exercise.

Use Practical Ways to Relax

- Regularly do things that help you relax. That can mean taking deep breaths, stretching, meditating, engaging in pleasurable hobbies, or doing something as simple as washing your face and hands.
- Pace yourself between stressful activities and do something fun after a hard task.
- Use time off to relax. Eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath or talk to family.
- Limit exposure to media.

Pay Attention to Your Body, Feelings and Spirit

- Recognize and heed early warning signs of stress.
- Recognize how your own past experiences affect your way of handling an event. Focus on the ways you handled previous stressful events.
- Connect with community support.

How to Help Children and Adolescents²

- Provide a safe environment.
- Remain calm. Children and adolescents will mimic your behavior.
- Keep normal routines.
- Share age-appropriate information.
- Prevent or limit media exposure.
- Practice active listening.
- Teach coping skills:
 - Slow breathing
 - Counting
 - Calming music
 - Using soft pillows, blankets or stuffed animals

More Information

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
[samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/disaster-types](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/disaster-types)

SAMHSA National Helpline
800-662-HELP (4357)
Information: info@samhsa.hhs.gov

Disaster Distress Helpline
800-985-5990 (call or text)

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
988 (free, confidential, 24/7)

AgriStress Helpline
(agricultural community)
833-897-2474 (call or text,
24/7 toll-free. Se habla español.)

American Red Cross
[redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
[cdc.gov/natural-disasters](https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters)

Ready
[ready.gov/coping-disaster](https://www.ready.gov/coping-disaster)

Find your local mental health or behavioral health authority here by scanning the QR code or clicking on the link below:



bit.ly/findtxlmha-lbha

1. SAMHSA Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event: Managing Stress, [store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma13-4776.pdf](https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma13-4776.pdf)

2. Parent Tips for Helping Preschool-Age Children after Disasters, [nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_preschool_age_children_after_disasters.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_preschool_age_children_after_disasters.pdf); Helping Children and Adolescents Cope With Traumatic Events, [nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-disasters-and-other-traumatic-events](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-disasters-and-other-traumatic-events); Parent Tips for Helping Adolescents after Disasters, [nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_adolescents_after_disasters.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_adolescents_after_disasters.pdf).