

# Tips for the Public: Managing Stress



## Know the Signs of Stress

### 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 wildfire, it is common to feel intense emotions and become overwhelmed.

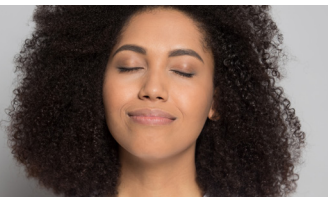
Learn how to cope with disasters and find other resources on the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Coping Tips** webpage:

[samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips](https://samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips)



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

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## Know How to Relieve Stress

### 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.
- Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends.
- 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 Adolescents

- 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/wildfires](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/disaster-types/wildfires)

### SAMHSA National Helpline

800-662-HELP (4357)

TTY: 800-487-4889 (call or text)

Information: [info@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:info@samhsa.hhs.gov)

### AgriStress Helpline

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

### Disaster Distress Helpline

800-985-5990 (call or text)

### Farm Aid Farmer Hotline

800-FARM-AID (800-327-6243)

Staff answer the Hotline Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET / 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. PT

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires)

### 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

988 (free, confidential, 24/7)

For additional information, contact your health care provider or your local health care authorities.

### Texas Panhandle Centers (Local Mental Health Authority) Crisis Hotline

806-359-6699 or

800-692-4039 (toll free crisis line)

1. Stress Management Techniques, Healthy Coping Strategies, Breathing Exercises; SAMHSA. <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/dbhis/stress-management-techniques-healthy-coping-strategies-breathing-exercise>.

2. "Cumulative Stress & Self-Care," Ron Mottern, Ph.D.; HHSC.