

When to seek help

For many, a sense of loss or feeling like you don't have control may be common. Try to be patient with yourself and others because people may not cope like they usually do. It takes time to grieve, adjust, rebuild, and recover. Many people recover on their own over time. Some people 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.

Important Numbers

- Health Link: **811**
- Mental Health Help Line: **1-877-303-2642**
- Addiction Help Line: **1-866-332-2322**
- First Nations & Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line: **1-855-242-3310**



1-877-303-2642

Mental Health Help Line
Mental Health Support 24/7

➤ To order this resource go to:
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Recovery After 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 (e.g., birthdays, holidays, 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 (e.g., walking, yoga, meditation, deep breathing) can reduce tension and help your body produce chemicals and hormones that help you cope better.

Take care of yourself

An unexpected disaster or emergency can be stressful, this can have a big impact on your emotional and physical health. There are many things you can do or keep doing to help you cope and recover from what you've been through.

- Eat well. Good nutrition fuels the brain and body so you can learn, work, and be active.
- Drink Water. Your body needs fluid for energy, memory, and focus.
- Be physically active every day. Go for a walk outside, a 15-minute walk in any weather can help improve 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 will make 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. Take a slow deep breath in as you count to 5 and then exhale, also counting to 5 (repeat 10 times).

Tips for parents and caregivers

Try to model healthy and positive coping skills. Your child sees your emotions through your words, facial expressions, and actions. How you respond to stress after a disaster or emergency can affect how your child reacts. Modeling calm and constructive reactions will help your child feel calmer and cope better. It's okay to have strong emotions. Name them (e.g., "I feel frustrated." or "I feel sad."). Talk about how you feel and how you're going to cope (e.g., deep breathing, positive thinking) so your child learns how to do the same.

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