

# 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 friend or family member. Maintain relationships and rely on your support system.
- Take Breaks
  - » Make time to unwind. Try to return to activities that you enjoy.
- Stay Informed
  - » Watch for news updates from reliable officials.
- Avoid
  - » Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of the event.
- Ask for Help
  - » Talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor or contact the SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

## 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.
- Limit exposure to media and social media coverage of the event.

## Common Signs of Distress

- Feelings of shock, numbness, or disbelief
- Change in energy or activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in appetite
- Sleeping problems or nightmares
- Feeling anxious, fearful, or angry
- Headaches, body pain, or skin rashes
- Chronic health problems get worse
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Seek help from your healthcare provider if these stress reactions interfere with your daily activities for several days in a row.

**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.**