**Response and Recovery: Disaster and Its Impact on Mental Health**

Following a natural disaster, a person can experience a range of thought and feelings. Facing death, danger or physical injury can cause huge stressors to one’s life — not to mention the possibility of losing your home, possessions or parts of your community. Such stressors can make you a risk for emotional and mental health problems. While these reactions can be strong, they are not a sign of weakness. Here are a few things to remember on your road to recovery.

**Be Patient and Persistent**

Recovery takes time, setbacks are normal. Be patient with yourself and your peers as you navigate the challenges of rebuilding. Celebrate small victories and focus on long-term resilience.

**Building Resilience**

Adapting to a difficult situations is never easy. You can’t change the past, but you can always look toward a brighter future. Building resiliency takes time, inner strength and help from those around you.

**Take Time for Yourself**

“A good laugh overcomes more difficulties and dissipates more dark clouds than any other one thing.” Laura Ingalls Wilder

Following a disaster, it’s important to find ways to regain a sense of safety and control. Try to get back into your regular routine and take the time to do things you enjoy. It’s okay to be happy during a difficult time.

**Practice Self-Care**

Taking care of your physical and mental health is vital during the recovery process. Prioritize self-care activities such as regular exercise, healthy eating and getting enough rest. Do activities that bring you joy and relaxation, whether it's reading, listening to music or spending time with family and friends.

**Establish a Support System**

Building and maintaining a support system is crucial during challenging times. Lean on family, friends and neighbors for emotional support and always be ready to offer the same in return.