

# Coping Through Disaster

When disaster strikes, it's often unexpected and overwhelming. We want to make sure your mental health isn't ignored. By prioritizing your thoughts and feelings, you can start your path toward recovery.

## Common Disaster Reactions

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Grief
- Shock
- Frustration

It's important to note that these are normal reactions to a very abnormal event. It's common for most people to experience many of these feelings. The good news is most people are resilient and over time bounce back.

## The Most at Risk After Disasters

**Children:** Young children are especially vulnerable after disasters because of their limited understanding of the situation and their dependence on adults and safe spaces.

**Previous Survivors:** The grief and loss associated with previous disasters can reignite past feelings and amplify current emotions.

**People with Pre-existing Mental Conditions:** People with mental health conditions often rely on structured routines and support networks to manage their symptoms. A disaster can easily disrupt daily lives.

**First Responders and Recovery Workers:** Workers who respond to disasters and aid in recovery are more likely to develop substance use disorders, depression or PTSD.

## We're Here to Listen

You might not feel great right now, but with the right support, you can get through this. Find encouragement, resources and hope at [SDBehavioralHealth.gov](http://SDBehavioralHealth.gov).

## Healthy Coping Methods

**Take a Break from Screens:** While staying up to date on information is important, limit your exposure to television or social media. Repeated exposure to sensitive topics can increase distress.

**Talk it Through:** Find someone you trust and can talk to. Let them know what's on your mind and how they can help.

**Rely on Others:** Trauma can be isolating but remember that many people are experiencing similar feelings. Together you can share a journey toward recovery and rely on each other for support.

**Get Back to It:** Life may feel chaotic right now, but getting back to your daily routine can help you feel calm and in control. Sleep and nutrition are more important than ever.

## Notes to Others

Here are a few things to say to those dealing with stress following a disaster.

"How Can I Help?"

"I'm Here for You"

"Your Feelings Are Valid"

"Take Time for Yourself"



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