



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a disaster. Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time. Notice and accept how you feel. Taking care of your emotional health during an emergency will help you think clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your family. Self-care during an emergency will help your long-term healing.

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**.

Take the following steps to cope with a disaster:

Take care of your body

Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep.

Take breaks

Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade. Try taking in deep breaths.

Stay informed

Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials, enough to stay informed. But, avoid too much exposure to news as it may cause too much stress.

Seek help when needed

If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor, or contact the SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-985-5990.

Look out for these common signs of distress:

Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear | Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels

Difficulty concentrating | Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images

Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes

Worsening of chronic health problems | Anger or short-temper | Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.



HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH EMERGENCIES

Regardless of your child's age, he or she may feel upset or have other strong emotions after an emergency. Some children react right away, while others may show signs of difficulty much later. How a child reacts and the common signs of distress can vary according to the child's age, previous experiences, and how the child typically copes with stress. Children react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with a disaster calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

What You Can Do to Help Children Cope with a Disaster

Setting a good example for your children by managing your stress through healthy lifestyle choices, such as eating healthy, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, and avoiding drugs and alcohol, is critical for parents and caregivers. When you are prepared, rested, and relaxed you can respond better to unexpected events and can make decisions in the best interest of your family and loved ones.

The following tips can help reduce stress before, during, and after a disaster or traumatic event.

Before

Talk to your children so that they know you are prepared to keep them safe.

Review safety plans before a disaster or emergency happens. Having a plan will increase your children's confidence and help give them a sense of control.

During

Stay calm and reassure your children.

Talk to children about what is happening in a way that they can understand. Keep it simple and appropriate for each child's age.

After

Provide children with opportunities to talk about what they went through or what they think about it. Encourage them to share concerns and ask questions.

You can help your children feel a sense of control and manage their feelings by encouraging them to take action directly related to the disaster. For example, children can help others after a disaster, including volunteering to help community or family members in a safe environment. Children should NOT participate in disaster cleanup activities for health and safety reasons.

It is difficult to predict how some children will respond to disasters and traumatic events. Because parents, teachers, and other adults see children in different situations, it is important for them to work together to share information about how each child is coping after a traumatic event.



City of El Monte

FIGHT SOCIAL ISOLATION ADULTS 65+

These related conditions affect a significant proportion of adults in the United States and have been calculated as being the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Americans will all likely experience increased social isolation and loneliness in combatting the pandemic. Identifying these additional health risks and developing mitigation plans are important first steps.

Make a list of organizations that can help

Create a list of community and faith-based organizations that you or the people in your plan can contact in the event you lack access to information, health care services, support and resources. If your neighborhood has a website or social media page and you haven't joined it, consider doing so to stay connected to neighbors, information and resources. The federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration also has an online locator and hotline, at 800-662-HELP (4357), to help people find counseling services near where they live. AARP Foundation's Connect2Affect program provides information, self-assessments and affordable options for low-income older people to stay connected.

Know who's most at risk for social isolation and loneliness

People at the highest risk of developing more serious illness from COVID-19 and who should be the most vigilant about social distancing will also be the most at risk of increased social isolation and loneliness. For example, the CDC has recommended that long-term care facilities discourage visitation. While planning will be important, understand that many people are likely to experience increased social isolation and loneliness. COVID-19 has also magnified existing disparities for low-income older adults. Internet coverage gaps – the so-called digital divide – are more prevalent in many places, especially low-income communities. Reaching out to our friends, families and neighbors can help protect all of us from COVID-19 as well as social isolation and loneliness.

Plan and connect

It's important to talk to family and friends to develop a plan to safely stay in regular touch as we socially distance ourselves, or if we are required to self-quarantine for a possible exposure or are in isolation for a COVID-19 infection. This plan should confirm whom you can reach out to if you need help accessing food, medicine and other medical supplies. Family and friends will need to work together to make sure they can remain connected without exposing each other to COVID-19. If you are a family caregiver or have someone close to you who's more at risk of social isolation, discuss what will happen if either of you develops symptoms and whom you could call on for support or help.

For more information, please visit aarp.org

The Friendly City of El Monte



City of El Monte

Emotional Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Infectious disease outbreaks such as COVID-19, as well as other public health events, can cause emotional distress and anxiety. Feeling anxious, confused, overwhelmed or powerless is common during an infectious disease outbreak, especially in the face of a virus with which the general public may be unfamiliar. These feelings of distress and anxiety can occur even if you are not at high risk of getting sick.



SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE:
1-800-273-8255

If you're thinking about suicide, are worried about a friend or loved one, or would like emotional support, the Lifeline network is available 24/7 across the United States.



DISASTER DISTRESS HELPLINE

1-800-985-5990

24/7 Help

The Disaster Distress Helpline, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Stress, anxiety, and other depression-like symptoms are common reactions after a disaster.

Trained Counselors

The Disaster Distress Helpline is staffed by trained counselors from a network of crisis call centers located across the United States. These counselors provide:

- Crisis counseling for people in emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster
- Information on how to recognize distress and its effects on individuals and families
- Tips for healthy coping
- Referrals to local crisis call centers for additional follow-up care and support

For more information, please visit samhsa.gov or suicidepreventionlifeline.org

The Friendly City of El Monte



City of El Monte

A Reference for Maintaining Mental Health & Well-Being

Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks

Be Proactive!

1. Stay informed with information from credible sources.
2. Stay connected with friends, family, and community groups.
3. Help others in need by volunteering and donating time and resources to trusted organizations.
4. Keep a positive attitude

The Department of Mental Health supports the wellbeing of our County family, friends and colleagues. When you hear, read, or watch news about an outbreak of an infectious disease, you may feel anxious and show signs of stress—even when the outbreak affects people far from where you live and you are at low or no risk of getting sick. These signs of stress are normal and may be more likely in people with loved ones in parts of the world affected by the outbreak. During an infectious disease outbreak, care for your own physical and mental health and reach out in kindness to those affected by the situation.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP COPE WITH EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

1. Manage Your Stress

- Stay informed. Refer to credible sources for updates on the local situation.
- Stay focused on your personal strengths.
- Maintain a routine.
- Make time to relax and rest.

2. Be Informed and Inform Your Family

- Become familiar with local medical and mental health resources in your community. Attend community meetings for resources/education.
- Avoid sharing unconfirmed news about the infectious disease to avoid creating unnecessary fear and panic.
- Give honest age-appropriate information to children and remember to stay calm; children often feel what you feel.

3. Connect with Your Community

- Keep contact with family and friends.
- Join community and/or faith groups.
- Accept help from family, friends, co-workers and clergy.
- Reach out to neighbors and friends with special needs who may need your help.

4. Reach Out and Help

- If you know someone affected by the outbreak, call them to see how they are doing, and remember to keep their confidentiality.
- Consider an act of kindness for those who have been asked to practice social distancing, such as having a meal delivered or offering to drop off homework at their doorstep.
- Locate and volunteer at a charity or organization near you.
- Encourage friends and family to get involved with you.

5. Be Sensitive

- Avoid blaming anyone or assuming someone has the disease because of the way they look or where they or their families come from.
- An infectious disease is not connected to any racial or ethnic group; speak up in kindness when you hear false rumors or negative stereotypes that foster racism and xenophobia. Consider seeking professional help if you or a loved one is having difficulty coping.

