



Recovery Takes Time

Disasters are usually unexpected and can have a big impact on your emotional and physical health. Most people will recover from a disaster or emergency over time.

Coping with stress after a disaster can affect your physical health. You might have more headaches, stomach problems, colds, or allergies than normal.

Stress can also make chronic health problems that you have (e.g., heart problems, high blood pressure) worse or harder to manage.

When talking to your doctor or other healthcare provider, let them know you've been through a disaster or emergency and if there have been changes in your health.

Take Care of Yourself

There are many things you can do (or keep doing) to help you cope and recover from what you've been through:

- eat nutritious food
- stay hydrated with water
- be active every day
- get enough rest and sleep

Remember, the things that can help you stay physically well can also help your emotional wellness.



Recovery After a Disaster or Emergency

Health Link
811

Mental Health Help Line
1-877-303-2642
Open 24 hours a day,
7 days a week

To order free copies of this resource visit
<https://dol.datacm.com/>
Login ID: mentalhealthresources
Password: mh2016

Produced by
Mental Health Promotion & Illness Prevention
email: hpdip.mh.earlyid@ahs.ca



Copyright ©2016 Alberta Health Services.

This material is protected by Canadian and other international copyright laws. All rights reserved. These materials may not be copied, published, distributed or reproduced in any way in whole or in part without the express written permission of Alberta Health Services. These materials are intended for general information only and are provided on an "as is," "where is" basis. Although reasonable efforts were made to confirm the accuracy of the information, Alberta Health Services does not make any representation or warranty, express, implied or statutory, as to the accuracy, reliability, completeness, applicability or fitness for a particular purpose of such information. These materials are not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health professional. Alberta Health Services expressly disclaims all liability for the use of these materials, and for any claims, actions, demands or suits arising from such use.

Revised: 2016-05-10, Reprint: 2016-05-10





CALM Method for Self-Care

Connect. Your family, friends, and community may have activities that bring you together to share memories. Find ways to help others when you can and accept help from others when you need it. Connecting with others helps build hope and reminds you that you're not alone.

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 what's changed or what you've lost. Part of recovery and healing is to recognize these times and to know 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. Creating a routine that includes healthy activities you did before the event is a needed step to recover. Build in stress-reducing activities like walking or yoga. Physical activity can help reduce tension and help your body produce chemicals and hormones that help you cope better.

For some people, the signs of stress after a disaster or emergency don't appear until weeks or months after the event has happened.

Warning signs that you're not coping well include:

- thinking about the disaster or emergency all the time
- having flashbacks to the event
- a change in your sleep pattern (e.g., sleeping less or more, waking up through the night, having nightmares, not sleeping at all)
- avoiding people or activities that you usually enjoy
- using alcohol or drugs more
- having thoughts about harming yourself or suicide
- changes in appetite (eating more or less than usual)
- feeling hopeless
- feeling worried or frustrated more than usual

Alcohol, drugs, or gambling might seem like a quick way to feel good again, but using these ways to cope can lead to bigger problems. Ask for help to find better ways to cope before it becomes a problem. Even if you had challenges coping before the event, you can still learn new healthier ways to cope. It's important to use your supports and be patient.

Talk to a trusted friend, counsellor, or support person if you:

- have emotional reactions that are getting in the way of relationships, work, or other important activities
- have other people telling you they're worried about how you're doing or feeling

