Disaster Distress Helpline
Call or Text 1-800-985-5990
disasterdistress.samhsa.gov

Call or text
1-800-985-5990
to get help and support
for any distress that you or someone
you care about may be feeling
related to any disaster.

The Helpline and Text Service are:
• Available 24 hours a day,
  7 days a week, year-round
• Free (standard data/text messaging
  rates may apply for the texting service)
• Answered by trained crisis counselors.

For people who are Deaf or hard of hearing
and for whom American Sign Language (ASL)
is your primary or preferred language, use your
videophone-enabled device to call 1-800-985-5990
or click on “ASL Now” at
disasterdistress.samhsa.gov
to be connected with a DDH crisis worker
fluent in ASL.

For Spanish Call or Text:
Text 1-800-985-5990
and press “2”

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration
Administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Dept. of Health
and Human Services (HHS).

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If you or someone you
know is struggling
after a disaster,
you are not alone.

“Ever since the tornado,
I haven’t been able to get a full
night’s sleep ...”

“I can’t get the sounds of
the gunshots out of my mind...”

“Things haven’t been the same
since my shop was flooded ...”

Talk With Us!

Like us on
Facebook:
facebook.com/
distresshelpline

Follow us on
Twitter (@distressline):
twitter.com/distressline
Disasters have the potential to cause emotional distress.

Some are more at risk than others:
- Survivors living or working in the impacted areas (youth & adults)
- Loved ones of victims
- First Responders, Rescue & Recovery Workers.

Stress, anxiety, and depression are common reactions after a disaster.

Warning signs of distress may include:
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Stomachaches or headaches
- Anger, feeling edgy or lashing out at others
- Overwhelming sadness
- Worrying a lot of the time; feeling guilty but not sure why
- Feeling like you have to keep busy
- Lack of energy or always feeling tired
- Drinking alcohol, smoking or using tobacco more than usual; using illegal drugs
- Eating too much or too little
- Not connecting with others
- Feeling like you won’t ever be happy again.

TIPS FOR COPING WITH STRESS AFTER A DISASTER:

**Take care of yourself.** Try to eat healthy, avoid using alcohol and drugs, and get some exercise when you can— even a walk around the block can make a difference.

**Reach out to friends and family.** Talk to someone you trust about how you are doing.

**Talk to your children.** They may feel scared, angry, sad, worried, and confused. Let them know it’s okay to talk about what’s on their mind. Limit their watching of TV news reports about the disaster. Help children and teens maintain normal routines to the extent possible. Role model healthy coping.

**Get enough ‘good’ sleep.** Some people have trouble falling asleep after a disaster, others keep waking up during the night.

If you have trouble sleeping:
- Only go to bed when you are ready to sleep
- Don’t watch TV or use your cell phone or laptop computer while you’re in bed
- Avoid eating (especially sugar) or drinking caffeine or alcohol at least one hour before going to bed
- If you wake up and can’t fall back to sleep, try writing in a journal or on a sheet of paper what’s on your mind.

**Know when to ask for help.** Signs of stress can be normal, short-term reactions to any of life’s unexpected events— not only after surviving a disaster, but also after a death in the family, the loss of a job, or a breakup.

It’s important to pay attention to what’s going on with you or with someone you care about, because what may seem like “everyday stress” can actually be:
- Depression (including having thoughts of suicide)
- Anxiety
- Alcohol or Drug Abuse.

If you or someone you know may be depressed, suffering from overwhelming feelings of anxiety, or possibly abusing alcohol or drugs ...

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You Are Not Alone.