

**Region 4 Behavioral Health System has compiled the following resources one can use to help themselves and others while dealing with stressful situations.**

**NEBRASKA FAMILY HELPLINE  
1-888-866-8660**

**NEBRASKA RURAL RESPONSE HOTLINE  
1-800-464-0258**

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL  
HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
1-800-985-5990**

**NEBRASKA**  
Good Life. Great Mission.  
DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**Mental Health Crisis Lines:**

**Madison, Stanton,  
Pierce, Antelope,  
Cuming, Cedar,  
and Knox Counties:  
(888) 370-7003**

**Platte, Boone, Nance,  
and Colfax Counties:  
(866) 758-4749**

**Boyd, Brown,  
Cherry, Holt,  
Keya Paha, and  
Rock Counties:  
(877) 488-9928**

**Dakota, Dixon,  
Thurston, Burt, and  
Wayne Counties:  
(877) 958-7776**

**Practical Tips for Relieving Stress**

**These stress management activities seem to work well for most people.**

**Use the ones that work for you.**

- **Talk with others** who understand and accept how you feel. Reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or faith-based leader to explore what meaning the event may have for you.
- **Body movement** helps to get rid of the buildup of extra stress hormones. Exercise once daily or in smaller amounts throughout the day. Be careful not to lift heavy weights.
- **Take deep breaths.** Most people can benefit from taking several deep breaths often throughout the day. Deep breathing can move stress out of your body and help you to calm yourself.
- **Listen to music.** Music is a way to help your body relax naturally. Play music timed to the breath or to your heartbeat.
- **Pay attention to your physical self.** Make sure to get enough sleep and rest each day. Don't leave resting for the weekend.
- **Use known coping skills.** How did you handle past traumatic events like a car crash or the death of a loved one? What helped then (e.g., spent time with family, went to a support group meeting)? Try using those coping skills now.



**BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH SYSTEM**

**206 MONROE AVE  
NORFOLK, NE 68701  
PH: (402) 370-3100  
FX: (402) 370-3125**



## Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event: **MANAGING STRESS**

### Important Things To Know About Disasters and Other Traumatic Events

If you were involved in a disaster such as a hurricane, flood, or even terrorism, or another traumatic event like a car crash, you may be affected personally regardless of whether you were hurt or lost a loved one. You can be affected just by witnessing a disaster or other traumatic event. It is common to show signs of stress after exposure to a disaster or other traumatic event, and it is important to monitor your physical and emotional health.

### Possible Reactions to a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event

Try to identify your early warning signs of stress. Stress usually shows up in the four areas shown below, but everyone should check for ANY unusual stress responses after a disaster or other traumatic event. Below are some of the most common reactions.

#### **YOU MAY FEEL EMOTIONALLY:**

- Anxious or fearful
- Overwhelmed by sadness
- Angry, especially if the event involved violence
- Guilty, even when you had no control over the traumatic event
- Heroic, like you can do anything
- Like you have too much energy or no energy at all
- Disconnected, not caring about anything or anyone
- Numb, unable to feel either joy or sadness

#### **YOU MAY HAVE PHYSICAL REACTIONS, SUCH AS:**

- Having stomachaches or diarrhea
- Having headaches or other physical pains for no clear reason
- Eating too much or too little
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors (shaking) or muscle twitches
- Being jumpy or easily startled



## After the Event

### Managing Your Tasks

If you've been involved in a disaster or other traumatic event, a number of tasks likely require your attention fairly urgently. First, make sure you are not injured, as sometimes survivors don't realize they've been physically hurt until many hours later. If you realize you've been injured, seek medical treatment before you do anything else. If you need to find a safe place to stay, work on that task next. Make sure to let a family member or friend know where you are and how to reach you. Secure your identification and any other papers you may need, such as insurance, bank, property, and medical records. Completing one task at a time may help you feel like you are gaining back some control, so make a list of the most important things you need to do. Remember to be patient with yourself. Take deep breaths or gently stretch to calm yourself before you tackle each task. Plan to do something relaxing after working for a while.

### YOU MAY HAVE BEHAVIORAL REACTIONS, SUCH AS:

- Having trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, sleeping too much, or trouble relaxing
- Noticing an increase or decrease in your energy and activity levels
- Feeling sad or crying frequently
- Using alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or even prescription medication in an attempt to reduce distressing feelings or to forget
- Having outbursts of anger, feeling really irritated and blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty accepting help or helping others
- Wanting to be alone most of the time and isolating yourself

### YOU MAY EXPERIENCE PROBLEMS IN YOUR THINKING, SUCH AS:

- Having trouble remembering things
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Feeling confused
- Worrying a lot
- Having difficulty making decisions
- Having difficulty talking about what happened or listening to others



## Tips for Talking With Children and Youth of Different Age Groups After a Disaster or Traumatic Event

### PRESCHOOL CHILDREN, 0–5 YEARS OLD

Give these very young children a lot of cuddling and verbal support:

- Take a deep breath before holding or picking them up, and focus on them, not the trauma.
- Get down to their eye level and speak in a calm, gentle voice using words they can understand.
- Tell them that you still care for them and will continue to take care of them so they feel safe.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE, 6–19 YEARS OLD

Nurture children and youth in this age group:

- Ask your child or the children in your care what worries them and what might help them cope.
- Offer comfort with gentle words, a hug when appropriate, or just your presence.
- Spend more time with the children than usual, even for a short while. Returning to school activities and getting back to routines at home is important too.
- Excuse traumatized children from chores for a day or two. After that, make sure they have age-appropriate tasks and can participate in a way that makes them feel useful.
- Support children spending time with friends or having quiet time to write or create art.
- Encourage children to participate in recreational activities so they can move around and play with others.



- Address your own trauma in a healthy way. Avoid hitting, isolating, abandoning, or making fun of children.
- Let children know that you care about them—spend time doing something special with them, and make sure to check on them in a nonintrusive way.

**A NOTE OF CAUTION:** Be careful not to pressure children to talk about a trauma or join in expressive activities. While most children will easily talk about what happened, some may become frightened. Some may even get traumatized again by talking about it, listening to others talk about it, or looking at drawings of the event. Allow children to remove themselves from these activities, and monitor them for signs of distress.

## Helpful Resources

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration Disaster Technical Assistance  
Center (SAMHSA DTAC)**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-308-3515  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

### ***Treatment Locators***

**Mental Health Treatment Facility Locator**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-789-2647 (English and español)  
TDD: 1-866-889-2647  
Website: <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/MHTreatmentLocator>

**MentalHealth.gov**  
Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.gov>  
*MentalHealth.gov provides U.S. government information  
and resources on mental health.*

**Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)  
(24/7 English and español); TDD: 1-800-487-4889  
Website: <http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

### ***Hotlines***

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)  
TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (1-800-799-4889)  
Website: <http://www.samhsa.gov>  
*This resource can be found by accessing the Suicide Prevention  
Lifeline box once on the SAMHSA website.*

**Workplace Helpline**  
Toll-Free: 1-800-WORKPLACE (1-800-967-5752)  
Website: <http://workplace.samhsa.gov>

**Office for Victims of Crime\***  
Toll-Free: 1-800-851-3420, or 301-519-5500  
TTY: 301-947-8374  
Website: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ovcres/welcome.html>

\*Note: Inclusion of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by  
the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## Disaster Distress Helpline

PHONE: 1-800-985-5990 TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746

WEB: <http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>



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## Common Stages of Disaster Recovery

Phase	Time Frame of Phase	Emotions	Behaviors	Most Important Resources
<b>Heroic</b>	Occurs at time of impact and period immediately afterward.	Altruism. All emotions are strong and direct at this time.	Heroic actions. Use of energy to save their own and others' lives and property.	Family groups, neighbors, and emergency teams.
<b>Honeymoon</b>	From one week to three-six months after the disaster.	Strong sense of having shared a catastrophic experience and lived through it	Victims clear out debris and wreckage buoyed by promises of great help in rebuilding their lives.	Pre-existing community groups and emergent community groups which develop from disaster.
<b>Disillusionment</b>	Lasts from two months to one or even two years.	Strong sense of disappointment, anger, resentment and bitterness appear if there are delays	People concentrate on rebuilding their own lives and solving individual problems.	Many outside agencies may now pull out. Indigenous community agencies may weaken.
<b>Reconstruction</b>	Lasts for several years following the disaster.	Victims now realize that they need to solve the problems of rebuilding their lives.	People have assumed the responsibility for their own recovery.	Community groups with a long-term investment in the community and its people become key.

