

Coping with Hurricane Aftermath

Stress Management

Coping with emotional distress post natural disaster can bring about many different symptoms and difficulties. Some of these can be natural responses to reacting to an abnormal situation, but some could be clear warning signs that you may need to reach out for additional resources or assistance.

Warning signs for disaster induced stress may include:

Difficulty sleeping, concentration, communicating thoughts, and maintaining balance in your life.

Limited attention span, low threshold of frustration and confusion, poor work performance.

Reluctance to leave home, and fear of crowds and strangers.

Tunnel vision, muffled hearing, colds or flu-like symptoms, depression and sadness, headaches and stomach problems.

Increased use of alcohol, and drugs, abandoning healthy eating habits and inability to sleep.

Understanding common responses to extreme events can help you to cope effectively with your feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Putting into practice some of the tips in this guide can help you along the path to managing the storm's aftermath.

Recognize that this is a challenging time but one that you can work to manage. You've tackled hardships at other times in your life. Tap into the skills you used to get through past challenges.

Allow yourself to mourn the losses you have experienced. Recognize that you may experience a variety of emotions and their intensity will likely less over time.

Ask for support from people who care about you and who will listen and empathize with your situation. But keep in mind that your typical support system may be weakened if those who are close to you also have experienced or witnessed the hurricane.

Engage in healthy behaviors to enhance your ability to cope with excessive stress. Eat well-balanced meals and get plenty of rest. If you experience difficulties sleeping, you may be able to find some relief through relaxation techniques. Avoid alcohol and drugs since these can increase a sense of depression and/or impede you from doing what is necessary to be resilient and cope with events.

Establish or reestablish routines such as eating meals at regular times and following an exercise program. Take some time off from the demands of daily life by pursuing hobbies or other enjoyable activities.

TREATMENT CAN HELP YOU HEAL

Experiencing a hurricane or other violent storm is a stressful event.

Feeling anxious or depressed is natural. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) recommends keeping informed about new information and developments, but avoiding overexposure to news rebroadcasts of the events and being sure that the outlets providing this information are credible.

If you have children, encourage them to talk about their fears and anxieties and assure them this situation will improve. But if your feelings are affecting your ability to carry out your responsibilities, it's important to seek professional help.

Remember to engage in non-work hobbies. Even short amounts of time participating in a hobby gives your mind a break and helps you to increase moments of pleasure.

Exercise regularly. Create an exercise routine, find something that you enjoy — it can be a sport that increases your heart rate or something brief or gentle like taking a walk or restorative yoga. Your CAP and YouTube has numerous videos for guided exercise, yoga or dance.

Don't hesitate to reach out for help. If these ideas seem difficult to incorporate or you are experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, or are unable to sleep or function well, don't hesitate to reach out to for help. CAP is scheduling appointments via Zoom for assessment, counseling and referrals. Contact us at (504) 568-8888 or CAP@LSUHSC.edu to schedule an appointment. You can also visit our website for additional information.

<https://www.lsuhschool.edu/orgs/campus-health/cap.aspx>

Feeling overwhelmed? Let's talk...

Are you having trouble with:

- Anxiety or depression?
- Adjusting to change?
- Unexpected & prolonged work/home stress?
- Maintaining healthy relationships during periods of isolation?



Campus Assistance Program

Counselors **ARE AVAILABLE** for phone or video conferencing sessions

504-568-8888 ○ cap@lsuhsc.edu