



Coping with stress during crises

Almost everyone feels distress during and after an emergency, and for most people it eases with time. This page offers practical ways to look after your mind and know when to seek more help.

CHECKLIST

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Comfort foods | ☐ Paper list of people to call for support |
| ☐ Books, games or puzzles | ☐ Radio to get trusted information |
| ☐ Ongoing prescribed medicines | |

PREPARE

- Prepare ahead, as planning can lower stress when an emergency comes.
- Build healthy habits now: good food, regular exercise and enough rest.
- Get to know neighbours and people around you who can offer support.
- Learn basic first aid so you feel more able to help.

USE AND MAINTAIN

- Accept that fear, anger, sadness and poor sleep are normal reactions.
- Stay informed but take regular breaks from news and social media.
- Practise deep breathing and other calming activities.
- Talk to friends, family or others you trust about how you feel.
- Keep following any mental health treatment and keep taking prescribed medicine.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and drugs not prescribed to you.
- Ask whether a mental health worker is available if you are in a shelter.

REVIEW

- Return to familiar routines, as they can be comforting.
- Share your experience at your own pace and listen to others.
- Spend time on activities you enjoy.
- Lean on family, friends, community or faith groups for support.

MY NOTES

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), How to Cope with Your Feelings (<https://www.cdc.gov/disability-emergency-preparedness/communication-resources/coping-easy-read.html>); UK Government (Prepare), Coping with trauma (<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/coping-with-trauma/>); Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency (MCF), Basics of home preparedness (<https://www.mcf.se/en/advice-for-individuals/home-preparedness--prepping-for-at-least-a-week/basics-of-home-emergency-preparedness/>); UK Government (Prepare), Get prepared for emergencies (<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/>); World Health Organization (WHO), Mental health in emergencies (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-in-emergencies>); Ready.gov (FEMA), Build A Kit (<https://www.ready.gov/kit>)
General guidance in our own words. Always follow your local authorities.