

Coping facts for: **ADULTS**

When disasters such as storms, fires, or tornadoes occur, people experience considerable losses. Even the threat of a disaster or terrorism can be stressful. The stress and emotions of disasters are normal reactions to the situation.

τ **Normal Reactions**

Each of us will respond in our own unique way. In time, we will recover and return to “normal” in a matter of days or weeks—sooner if we take care of ourselves. However, it is not uncommon to experience the following reactions:

Fatigue	Anger	Crying
Sleep Disturbances	Withdrawal	Feeling Overwhelmed
	Recurring Images of the Disaster	Depression

τ **Taking Care of Ourselves**

- Seek support from family, friends, and colleagues. Sometimes those who know you cannot appreciate the extent of what you have been through; therefore, they can appear unsympathetic. In this case, look for support from others.
- Help others by sharing thoughts and checking out how they are doing.
- Make use of available community services.
- Resorting to alcohol, drugs or overeating adds to stress levels and interferes with physical and emotional well being. Healthy routines are important for recovery.
- Exercise, alternated with relaxation, will alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- Keep a journal.
- Structure your time, keep busy. Being alone is probably not what is needed.
- Continue your daily schedule at work and leisure activities whenever possible.
- Expect time to be the ultimate healer. Talk to a professional if the wait seems too long for you or if you need immediate assistance.

τ **When to Seek Professional Assistance**

Everyone copes differently with a disaster, but sometime we need help to get through it. Ask for help if you need it, especially when:

- Things are falling apart: marital problems, family conflict, loss of friendships, problems at work or school.
- There is no medical explanation for chronic physical problems.
- Preoccupation with the tragic event interferes with life activities.
- Isolation and fear cause feelings of desperation.
- Experiencing feelings of hopelessness, depression, or extreme anger.
- You are reliant on alcohol or other drugs.

*From Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Disaster Technical Assistance Center (DTAC).*

<http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/EmergencyServices/>