

Coping Following a Tornado or Other Natural Disaster



Coping Suggestions for You, Family, and Friends:

- Remember your reactions are not unusual. They are normal reactions to an abnormal event.
- Structure your time and keep busy.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Do things you enjoy and remember to take care of yourself.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals even if you don't feel much like eating.
- Within the first 24-48 hours, periods of physical exercise with healthful limits, alternated with relaxation, will help alleviate some of your physical reactions.
- Talk to people and spend time with others. Talking with supportive friends and family members is a healing medicine.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Do not numb the pain with overuse of alcohol or other drugs. This can further complicate your situation.
- Give yourself permission to feel upset and share your feelings with others.
- Keep a journal. Write your way through your feelings.
- Try not to make any important life changes until you are confident you are making rational decisions.
- Return to making as many daily decisions as possible. It may give you a feeling of control over your life.
- Reoccurring thoughts, dreams, and flashbacks are normal. Don't be too upset by them. They will tend to decrease in frequency and intensity over time.
- Realize that those around you are also under stress and need your patience too.
- Help your co-workers as much as possible by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.

Suggestions for Family and Friends:

- Reassure your friend or loved one that they are now safe.
- Listen with focus and let them know you care.
- Be willing to just sit quietly with them.
- Arrange and participate in low risk activities that the person would enjoy.
- Help them with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, and caring for their family.
- Give them some private time.
- Try not to take their anger or other feelings personally.
- Don't tell them that "you are lucky it wasn't worse" - traumatized people are not consoled by those statements. Instead tell them you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to try to understand and help them.

Source: International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc.

If you need extra support, please schedule an appointment with a licensed Best Care EAP counselor. Get started by completing our [Counseling Registration Form](#) or call Best Care EAP at (402) 354-8000 or (800) 801-4182 and we'll be glad to help.

