

Handling Stress & Fear during Emergencies: Steps to Cope and Prepare for Disasters

Earthquakes and other emergencies cause concern for people around the world. It's normal to experience stress, anxiety and fear during natural or human-made disasters. However, it's important to effectively manage our emotions and redirect our energy. Here are some helpful steps to take:

1. Manage Your Stress

- Fight fear with facts. Refer to credible sources for periodic updates on the situation.
- Stay in familiar, comfortable surroundings.
- Keep usual routines for eating, sleeping and exercising.
- Try relaxing stretches and breathing exercises.
- Keep a positive attitude and outlook.

For more information, call the Department of Mental Health's **Access Line 24/7 Helpline: (800) 854-7771** or visit: <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/get-help-now>

2. Prepare Yourself and Your Family

- Create or revise emergency plans for use in your home, work, or car.
- Build or refresh emergency kits with basic supplies.
- Know how and where you'll contact and meet up with your loved ones.
- Know your office building's escape routes.
- Create or revise a plan to help care for persons with disabilities and other access and functional needs.

For more information, visit the Department of Public Health: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/hea/library/topics/eprp/>

3. Connect with Your Community

A strong social support network is a great defense against stress.

- Keep contact with friends, extended family, coworkers and neighbors.
- Join gatherings through a community or religious group.
- Participate in fun activities within your community and neighborhood.

4. Reach Out and Help

Volunteering and donating time and resources to trustworthy charities are healthy and productive ways to get involved and help.

- Locate a charity or volunteer organization near you.
- Find out what's needed and how you can be of most help.
- Encourage friends and family to get involved with you.



Be Proactive

1. Prepare yourself and your family for emergencies.
2. Set up strong social support networks.
3. Help others in need by volunteering and donating time and resources to trusted organizations.
4. Keep a positive attitude and outlook.

More Information

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Emergency Preparedness and Response
<http://ph.lacounty.gov/eprd>

Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management
<https://ceo.lacounty.gov/document-library>

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/get-help-now>