



COPING *AFTER* A NATURAL DISASTER

Alaska Earthquake

If you turn on the TV, pick up a newspaper or go on the Internet, you'll likely find the news is full of negative stories, including natural disasters around the world. But when a tragedy strikes closer to home — like in your community — it may be even harder to process.

While people may respond to and deal with a natural disaster in different ways, here are several safety tips, recovery tips, and national resources available to you.

Some Disaster Safety Tips to Follow

- Listen to local officials for updates and instructions. Evacuate if necessary.
- Check-in with family and friends by texting or using social media.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Watch out for debris and downed power lines.
- Avoid walking or driving through flood waters. Just 6 inches of moving water can knock you down, and fast-moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
- Photograph the damage to your property in order to assist in filing an insurance claim.
- Be prepared for the future with a disaster preparedness kit and family communication plan.

Some Tips for Recovering from a Traumatic Event

- **Start a dialogue.** Reach out to friends or family for support. It's one simple way to help process a natural disaster.
- **Choose when to connect.** Disconnecting from media may give you time to focus on important things — like your health or stress management.
- **Change your perspective.** Try to find something you've learned from the negative experience. It may be helpful to gain a broader perspective.
- **Focus on your feelings.** Acknowledge your feelings as they occur to you. Self-awareness is an important first step in learning to manage your feelings.
- **Pay attention to your health.** Don't forget the importance of regular exercise*, a healthy diet, and good sleep.

*If you're pregnant, physically inactive or have a health condition like arthritis, diabetes or heart disease, check with your doctor before starting an exercise program or increasing your activity level. They can tell you what types and amounts of activities are safe for you.

Additional National Resources:

FEMA (Information about Federal Assistance) – <http://www.fema.gov>

American Red Cross – <http://www.redcross.org/>

CDC (Emergency Preparedness) – <http://emergency.cdc.gov/>

Ready.gov (Preparation and Recovery) – <https://www.ready.gov/>

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