



How can I get back to my normal life as soon as possible?



Focus on What Needs to Happen Today

Decide what's important. It can be easier to cope if you break down big challenges into smaller, manageable steps.

- Make a list of what you need to do in the next day or week to keep you and your family safe and comfortable.
- Find support for you and your family.
- Return to your daily routines as much as possible. Routines like mealtimes, bedtimes, and day-to-day activities can help you feel calm and in control.
- Find a reliable source for updates and information. Take regular breaks from listening to or watching news reports. Thinking and talking about the events too much can make you feel more stressed.

What Can Wait Until Tomorrow?

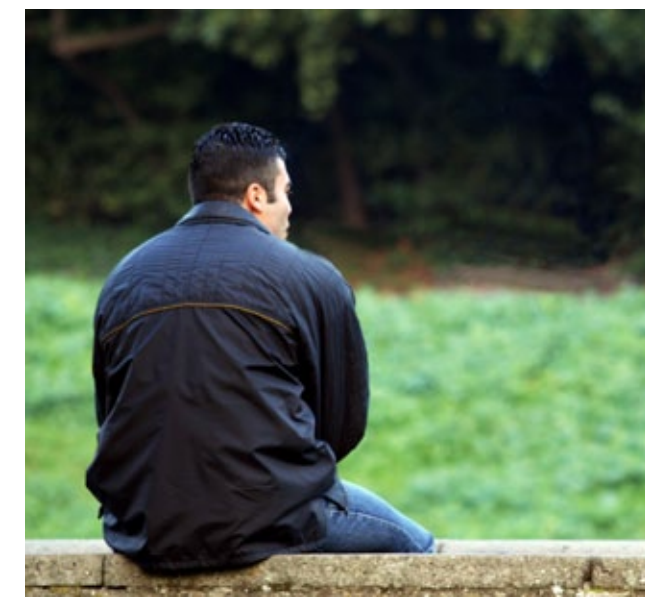
- Find out when to follow-up with insurance claims.
- Find out when to apply for relief funds.
- Write a list of repairs that need to be done.



Try not to make big decisions if you are very upset.

If you or someone you know needs support, call:
 Health Link Alberta
 Toll Free: 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
 Calgary: 403-943-LINK
 Edmonton: 780-408-LINK

Responding to a Disaster or Emergency



For information on how to request additional copies of this resource email:
 HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@albertahealthservices.ca
 Alberta Health Services
 Mental Health Screening & Early Identification
 10101 Southport Road S.W.
 Calgary, AB T2W 3N2

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While you cannot control a stressful situation,
YOU CAN control how you **REACT** to it.

R.E.A.C.T.

Remove yourself and your loved ones from danger. Finding shelter, water, and food is the first step to coping. This can help you feel emotionally safe.

Eat nutritious food and drink water. Stay away from foods or drinks that have a lot of sugar or caffeine. These foods or drinks may give you a quick boost, but end up making you feel more stressed afterwards. Try to drink 250 ml (1 cup) of water every 2 hours during the day.

Activity. Find balance between activity and rest. Physical activity can help you feel calmer and cope better. Walking for 15 minutes makes the brain release chemicals that help calm you so that you cope better with stress. Get enough sleep. Too little sleep can make you feel overwhelmed, which makes it hard to cope. If you need to, take 15 to 45 minute naps during the day. Don't nap after 6:00 p.m. so you are tired at bedtime.

Connect. Find ways to help others when you can and accept help from others when you need it. This will help remind you that you are not alone. Helping each other builds community and hope.

Talk. Let friends and family know where you are and how you are doing. Talk to family, friends, or support workers about how you feel. Realizing that your feelings are a normal response to an unexpected event can help you recover.

Be patient with yourself and the people around you.

People have different ways of coping with the same event. For some people, the signs of stress after a traumatic event don't appear until weeks or months after the event happens.

Some common reactions to traumatic experiences:

Physical

- headache or body aches
- upset stomach, diarrhea, cramps
- being more thirsty than normal
- changes in your energy level
- faster heart rate or faster breathing than normal
- sweating

Behaviour

- always on the alert
- startle easy
- sleep too much or too little
- withdrawing from people

Emotional

- feeling anxious, helpless, or guilty
- having mood swings or no emotion
- feeling unmotivated
- feeling disconnected from others

Thinking

- trouble concentrating or remembering
- recalling other sad events
- trouble making decisions
- questioning spiritual beliefs



Talk to a trusted friend, counselor, or other support person in your life if you are finding:

- you feel very stressed and you can't manage on your own
- your emotional reactions are getting in the way of your relationships, work, or other important activities
- other people are worried about how you are doing or feeling

Traumatic Events Change People

A single traumatic event can create a number of losses at the same time. For example, after a fire, you may have lost your home, your feeling of safety, or people you know may be missing, injured, or have died. It can be hard to cope when you find yourself in these situations. Traumatic experiences can make you feel uncertain and anxious about the future.

Everyone who goes through a traumatic event is affected in some way. While you are coping with a disaster or emergency, it is normal to have symptoms of stress.