



Hurricane Toolkit

Support for you and your loved ones during a hurricane and hurricane recovery.

We are Here to Help.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources to help you stay balanced during an emotionally challenging time.



What To Do Before

If advised to evacuate, do so immediately

- You may have to leave your home quickly and go to a safe place.
- Know where you will go, how you will get there, and where you will stay.
- Plan well in advance if you will need help leaving or are using public transportation.
- Mobile, manufactured, trailer homes, and recreational vehicles (RVs) are not safe in high wind events. Plan ahead by preparing to evacuate to a safe location.

Plan to shelter safely

- Be ready to live without power, water, gas, phone, and internet for a long time.
- Practice going to a designated safe shelter for high winds. The next best protection is a small room with no windows on the lowest level of a sturdy building that is not likely to flood.
- Be aware that flooding can happen quickly. Have a plan to evacuate fast before floodwaters reach you.
- Create a personal support team of people you may assist and who can assist you.

Plan to stay connected

- Download the FEMA app to receive real-time emergency alerts from the National Weather Service and find a nearby shelter: <https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products#download>
- Plan to monitor local weather and news.
- Have a backup battery or a way to charge your cell phone.
- Have a battery-powered radio during a power outage.
- Understand the types of alerts that you may receive and have a plan to respond when you receive them.
 - A WATCH means Be Prepared!
 - A WARNING means Take Action!
 - Alerts you may receive include: Hurricane Watch & Warning, Tropical Storm Watch & Warning, Extreme Wind Warning, Storm Surge Watch & Warning, Flash Flood Watch & Warning, Flood Watch & Warning.



What To Do Before

Learn emergency skills

- Learn First Aid and CPR.
- Utilities may be offline. Be ready to live without power, gas, and water. Plan for your electrical needs, including cell phones and medical equipment. Talk to your doctor. Plan for backup power.

Gather emergency supplies

Gather food, water, and medicine. Stores and pharmacies might be closed. Organize supplies into a Go-Kit and a Stay-at-Home Kit.

- Go-Kit: at least three days of supplies that you can carry with you. Include backup batteries and chargers for your devices (cell phone, CPAP, wheelchair, etc.).
- Stay-at-Home Kit: at least two weeks of supplies.
- Have a 1-month supply of medication in a child-proof container and medical supplies or equipment.
- Keep personal, financial, and medical records safe and easy to access (hard copies or securely backed up). Consider keeping a list of your medications and dosages on a small card to carry with you.

Protect your home: Wind

- Secure or bring inside outdoor items, such as lawn furniture and trash cans, that could be picked up by high winds and hurt someone.
- Anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside, such as gas grills and propane tanks.
- Trim or remove trees close enough to fall on your home.
- Protect windows with permanent storm shutters or sheeting.

Protect your home: Flood

- Clean out drains, gutters, and downspouts.
- Stockpile protective materials such as plastic sheeting and sandbags.
- Consider installing a sump pump with battery backup.
- Consider elevating the heating system, water heater, and electric panel.
- Review insurance policies with your agency.



What To Do During

If local authorities advise you to evacuate, go right away

- Bring your Go-Kit.
- Follow evacuation routes and do not try to take shortcuts because they may be blocked.
- Check with local officials for shelter locations. Download the Red Cross Emergency App to find shelters near you: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cube.arc.hzd&hl=en_CA&gl=US

Determine your best protection for high winds and flooding

- Take shelter in a designated storm shelter or an interior room for high winds.
- Stay away from glass windows and doors.
- Move to higher ground before flooding begins.

What To Do After

Stay safe

- Wait for officials to say it is safe before going back home.
- Avoid damaged or fallen power lines, poles, and downed wires. They can electrocute you.
- Do not touch floodwaters because they may contain sewage, bacteria, and chemicals that can make you ill.
- If power is out, use flashlights or battery-powered lanterns to reduce fire risk.
- Be aware of and take steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning devices should never be used inside a home, basement, garage, tent, or camper—or even outside near an open window. Carbon monoxide can't be seen or smelled, but it can kill you fast. If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak, get to fresh air right away—do not delay.



What To Do After

Stay healthy

- When in doubt, throw it out! Throw out food that got wet or warm.
- Ask your healthcare provider or doctor about refrigerated medicines.
- Hurricanes and flooding can make drinking water unsafe. Monitor your local health department for information about drinking water safety.

Cleanup safely

- Wear appropriate protective equipment including gloves, goggles, and boots.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet.
- When cleaning heavy debris, work with a partner.
- Make sure that you have proper training before using equipment, such as chainsaws.
- Heart attacks are a leading cause of deaths after a hurricane. Be mindful of overworking.
- Cleaning up is a big job. Take breaks and take care of yourself.

Take care of yourself

- It's normal to have a lot of bad feelings, stress, or anxiety.
- Eat healthy food and get enough sleep to help you deal with stress.
- You can contact the Disaster Distress Helpline if you need to talk to someone. Call or text 1-800-985-5990.

Source: American Red Cross Hurricane Relief



Friends & Family Can Help After a Traumatic Event

Help Them Support You

Your friends and family can offer you support after experiencing a traumatic event. They will be very concerned about you, and you can help them support you by letting them know how you are feeling. Even though they care, they didn't experience the trauma with you. It's okay to remind them about your experience and ask them to be patient as you recover. This will help them help you. Share this toolkit with them so they know what to expect and how they can offer support as you need it.

Explain Your Feelings

Tell your friends and family you have gone through a traumatic experience. Let them know that you will need their support and understanding to cope and recover, and that it may be weeks, or even months, before the effects of this experience have diminished. Also let them know you may be experiencing some of the following feelings and behaviors:

- Increased anxiety or fear
- Short temper or irritability
- Nightmares and sleep problems
- Confusion and/or short term memory loss
- Difficulty making decisions
- Fear of being alone
- Physical aches and pains
- Tendency to withdraw

Tell Friends & Family How They Can Help

"I might be feeling or acting differently for a while. Here are some ways you can help when I'm struggling:"

- Be patient - don't just tell me to think positive
- Listen and try to understand my feelings
- Ask how you can help
- Temporarily take over some of my responsibilities
- Help me feel safe again: *(Drive me to work, help me feel safe by installing new safety precautions at home such as door locks, run errands with me, or just spend some extra time with me.)*

A traumatic event can trigger memories of other unrelated traumas, such as an illness, injury, or the past death of a loved one. If you are having other traumatic memories, tell someone. Your friends and family can only help if they know what you are dealing with. So if your feelings or behaviors are changing or getting worse, let someone know so they can support your needs.

If you don't feel comfortable talking to your friends and family, or if you need more help than they can offer, you should ***reach out to professionals by calling the EAP.***

21 Things You Can Do While You're Living Through a Traumatic Experience

1. Take immediate action to ensure your safety and the safety of others. If it's possible, remove yourself from the event/scene in order to avoid further traumatic exposure.
2. Address your acute medical needs (e.g., If you're having difficulty breathing, experiencing chest pains or palpitations, seek immediate medical attention).
3. Find a safe place that offers shelter, water, food, and sanitation.
4. Become aware of how the event is affecting you (i.e., your feelings, thoughts, actions, and your physical and spiritual reactions).
5. Know that your reactions are normal responses to an abnormal event. You are not "losing it" or "going crazy."
6. Speak with your physician or healthcare provider and make him/her aware of what has happened to you.
7. Be aware of how you're holding-up when there are children around you. Children will take their cues from the adults around them.
8. Try to obtain information. Knowing the facts about what has happened will help you to keep functioning.
9. If possible, surround yourself with family and loved ones. Realize that the event could be affecting them, too.
10. Tell your story. And, allow yourself to feel. It's okay not to be okay during a traumatic experience.
11. You may experience a desire to withdraw and isolate, causing a strain on significant others. Resist the urge to shut down and retreat into your own world.
12. Traumatic stress may compromise your ability to think clearly. If you find it difficult to concentrate when someone is speaking to you, focus on the specific words they are saying and work to actively listen. Slow down the conversation and try repeating what you have just heard.
13. Don't make important decisions when you're feeling overwhelmed. Allow trusted family members or friends to assist you with necessary decision-making.
14. If stress is causing you to react physically, use controlled breathing techniques to stabilize yourself. Take a slow deep breath by inhaling through your nose, hold your breath for 5 seconds and then exhale through your mouth. Upon exhalation, think the words "relax," "let go," or "I'm handling this." Repeat this process several times.
15. Realize that repetitive thinking and sleep difficulties are normal reactions. Don't fight the sleep difficulty. Try the following: Eliminate caffeine 4 hours prior to your bedtime, create the best sleep environment you can, consider taking a few moments before turning out the lights to write down your thoughts thus emptying your mind.
16. Give yourself permission to rest, relax, and engage in non-threatening activity. Read, listen to music, consider taking a warm bath, etc.
17. Physical exercise may help to dissipate the stress energy that has been generated by your experience. Take a walk, ride a bike, or swim.
18. Create a journal. Writing about your experience may help to expose yourself to painful thoughts and feelings and, ultimately, enable you to assimilate your experience.
19. If you find that your experience is too powerful, allow yourself the advantage of professional and/or spiritual guidance, support, and education.
20. Try to maintain your schedule. Traumatic events will disrupt the sense of normalcy. We are all creatures of habit. By maintaining our routines, we can maintain a sense of control at a time when circumstances may lead us to feel a loss of control.
21. Crises present opportunities. Cultivate a mission and purpose. Seize the energy from your experience and use it to propel you to set realistic goals, make decisions, and take action.

Source: American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress



General Hurricane Resources

American Red Cross Emergency App

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.cube.arc.hzd&hl=en_CA&gl=US

FEMA Emergency App

<https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app>

Disaster Assistance

<https://www.disasterassistance.gov>

Gas Buddy for Gas Locations

<https://www.gasbuddy.com>

NOAA Hurricane Ian Tracking

<https://www.noaa.gov/ian>