



# MOVING FORWARD

**N**o one who sees a natural disaster is untouched by it. When a storm hits your community, lives change forever.

As you continue to deal with recovery efforts – insurance claims, cleanup, repairs, financial costs and more – it is common to feel stressed or overwhelmed for short periods.

If you know the signs of stress in yourself and your loved ones, you can take steps to relieve symptoms before they result in long-term physical or emotional issues.

This guide will help you recognize your own emotional reactions to a disaster and give you tools to help move forward again.

## SIGNS OF STRESS

Sadness, grief and anger are common reactions to a natural disaster. So are:

- Becoming easily frustrated.
- Worrying excessively.
- Difficulty communicating thoughts.
- Trouble sleeping or relaxing.
- Wanting to be alone.
- Blaming others for everything.
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun.
- Overwhelming guilt or self-doubt.
- Limited attention span.
- Mood swings and crying easily.
- Difficulty maintaining balance.
- Headaches/stomach problems.
- Tunnel vision/muffled hearing.
- Colds or flu-like symptoms.
- Poor work performance.
- Reluctance to leave the house.
- Fear of crowds, strangers, or being alone.
- Increased use of drugs/alcohol.

Focusing on your strengths and abilities, as well as accepting help from others when it is offered, will help reduce the feelings of anxiety in working through the aftermath of a natural disaster.

## ACTION PLANNING

If you are experiencing feelings that are upsetting and keep you from doing the things you want, here are some tips for moving forward:

- Talk to someone about your feelings, even if it may be difficult.
- Relax your body often—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, exercise.
- Do a fun thing after a stressful activity.
- Don't hold yourself responsible for disastrous events that you cannot help.
- Maintain daily routines and limit demanding responsibilities.
- Spend time with family and friends. Don't isolate yourself.
- Accept the realities of loss.
- Allow yourself and your family to grieve.
- Adjust to the new environment.
- Put closure to the situation and move on.
- Have faith in better times to come.

## HALT TO SEE IF YOU ARE:

**H**ungry ■ **A**ngry ■ **L**onely ■ **T**ired

Eat right, get enough sleep, share your thoughts and feelings, listen and learn how others are coping, as you are not alone during this time of recovery.

## ASK FOR HELP

For free assistance in dealing with the pressures and aftermath of wind- and flood-related storms, please call:

**1-800-850-8775**

Trained staff will listen to your concerns, provide information and refer you to other resources if necessary. It's free and confidential.

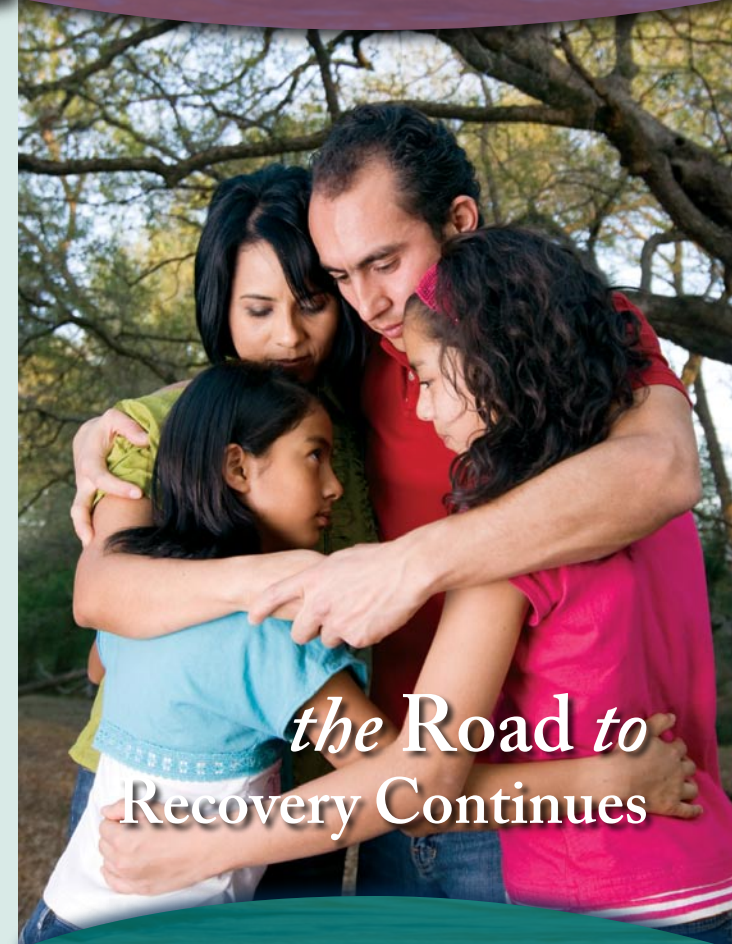
- If there is a life-threatening emergency, please call 911.
- For Suicide Prevention, call 1-800-273-8255. TTY users, call 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)
- For all other mental health crisis needs, please call the Washington State Mental Health Crisis Line in your county at:

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT  
[www.dshs.wa.gov/DisasterOutreachServices](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/DisasterOutreachServices)



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## THE STORM HAS PASSED...



*the Road to*  
**Recovery Continues**

A GUIDE FOR ADULTS  
COPING WITH THE AFTERMATH  
OF A NATURAL DISASTER

