

# Handling Stress during the Wildfires



The wildfires and evacuations can cause a lot of stress and anxiety.

You may have to evacuate and leave your home, or you may be feeling scared about how close the fire is getting.



# People can have different reactions to this stress, such as:

- Disbelief or shock
- Anxiety about the future
- Difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Trouble sleeping
- Irritability or even anger
- Sadness and depression
- Feeling powerless or hopeless
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Crying for “no apparent reason”
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs

It is normal to have lots of feelings right now, and to have difficulty managing your stress during a scary and uncertain time like this.



# Being Prepared

One of the best things you can do not only for your physical safety but also for your mental health, is to be prepared for what might happen.

Make sure that your family has an emergency evacuation plan in case you need to leave your home. If you know you may need to leave, start getting supplies together.

**Being prepared will help you feel more in control!**

## Other tips for coping during this difficult time

**Talk about it--**By talking with others about the your feelings and what is happening, you can relieve stress and realize that others share your feelings.

**Stay in touch with friends and family--**They can help you through this tough time. You can stay in touch by phone or online.

**Take care of yourself--**Get plenty of rest and eat healthy food.

**Limit exposure to images of the fires**--Watching or reading too much news about the fires over and over again can increase your stress.

**Find time for activities you enjoy**--Read a book, color, watch a favorite tv show, or do something else you find enjoyable. These healthy activities can help you get your mind off the disaster and keep the stress in check.

**Take one thing at a time**--Pick one urgent task at a time and work on it. Once you accomplish that task, choose the next one. “Checking off” tasks will give you a sense of accomplishment and make things feel less overwhelming.

# Compassion during Hard Times



When you have compassion for someone, it means that you notice when they are having a hard time and you care about them. Your heart opens and you want to be kind to that person and help them.

# Having compassion for yourself

Self-compassion is the treating yourself the same way when YOU are having a hard time, or scared, or anxious.

Instead of saying something mean to yourself or ignoring your feelings, you take a moment to stop to tell yourself, “This is really hard,” and figure out how you can comfort yourself.



# Remember to breathe!

When you feel stressed, try breathing more slowly:



- Take a deep breath, counting to 3
- See if you can breathe deeply enough that your stomach moves out
- Hold that breath while counting to 3
- Slowly let it out to the count of 3

Give yourself a 5 minute break to relax

Meditation for Peace during Crisis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7iY9pwEk6Y&t=6s>

Remember that you are not  
alone.

We are all in this together!



If you need additional help you can call:

The **Disaster Distress Helpline (DDH)**, a national hotline dedicated to providing year-round disaster crisis counseling.

Call 1-800-985-5990 or

text “TalkWithUs” or “Hablanos” to 66746



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