



## Managing your distress about an earthquake from afar

For people with friends and family living in areas affected by a tragic earthquake, watching news coverage of the devastation can be very distressing, particularly if there is no information about the safety and well-being of friends and family.

### What you can do

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- **Take a news break.** Watching endless replays of footage from the disaster can exacerbate stress. Although you will want to keep informed — especially if you have loved ones in earthquake-affected areas — taking a break from watching the news can lessen your distress.
- **Control what you can.** There are routines in your life that you can continue such as going to work or school and making meals. It is helpful to maintain these routines and schedules to give yourself a break from constantly thinking about the earthquake.
- **Engage in healthy behaviors.** Eat well-balanced meals, engage in regular exercise like going for a long walk and get plenty of rest. Bolstering your physical well-being is good for your emotional health and can enhance your ability to cope.
- **Keep things in perspective.** While an earthquake can bring tremendous hardship and loss, try to find and focus on something positive. Persevere and trust in your ability to get through the challenging days ahead.
- **Find a productive way to help if you can.** Many organizations are set up to provide various forms of aid to survivors. Contributing or volunteering is a positive action that can help you to make a difference.
- **Remain hopeful.** Many people who have experienced tragedy find that they grow in some respect as a result of persevering through the hardship. Over time, people can discover personal strengths and develop a greater appreciation for life.

### How psychologists can help

Psychologists can help by providing evidence-based treatments to help people manage their emotions around traumatic events. Most commonly, psychologists use therapy (sometimes referred to as psychotherapy or talk therapy). There are many different styles of therapy, but the psychologist will choose the type that best addresses the person's problem and best fits the patient's characteristics and preferences.

Some common types of therapy are cognitive, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, interpersonal, humanistic, psychodynamic or a combination of a few therapy styles. Therapy can be for an individual, couples, family or other group. Some psychologists are trained to use hypnosis, which research has found to be effective for a wide range of conditions including pain, anxiety and mood disorders.

For some conditions, therapy and medication are a treatment combination that works best. For people who benefit from medication, psychologists work with primary care physicians, pediatricians and psychiatrists on their overall treatment. Two states, New Mexico and Louisiana, have laws allowing licensed psychologists with additional, specialized training to prescribe from a list of medications that improve emotional and mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety. To find a psychologist in your area, visit the [Psychologist Locator](#).

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