



## Tips for Coping

# Managing Your Stress

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Financial and personal stress is a normal reaction after a stressful event and may impact some individuals and communities for a long period of time. During and after the event, be aware of how you are feeling physically and emotionally. Know the signs of stress in yourself and your loved ones, how to relieve stress, and when to seek help.

### *Know the Signs of Stress*

#### Your Behavior:

- An increase or decrease in your energy levels
- An increase in your alcohol and tobacco use, or use of illegal drugs
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing
- Having trouble relaxing or sleeping
- Crying frequently
- Worrying excessively
- Wanting to be alone most of the time
- Blaming other people for everything
- Having difficulty communicating or listening
- Having difficulty giving or accepting help
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun

#### Your Body:

- Having stomach aches or diarrhea
- Having headaches and other pains
- Losing your appetite or eating too much
- Sweating or having chills
- Getting tremors or muscle twitches
- Being easily startled
- Experiencing a change in sleeping patterns

#### Your Emotions:

- Being anxious or fearful
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling angry
- Feeling heroic, overly energetic, or invulnerable
- Not caring about anything
- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness

#### Your Thinking:

- Having trouble remembering things
- Feeling confused
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Having difficulty making decisions

## ***Know How To Relieve Stress***

You can manage and alleviate your stress by taking time to take care of yourself.

### Keep Yourself Healthy:

- Eat healthy foods, and drink water
- Avoid excessive amounts of caffeine
- Avoid use of alcohol or drugs
- Get enough sleep and rest
- Get physical exercise

### Use Practical Ways to Relax:

- Relax your body often by doing things that work for you—take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, engage in pleasurable hobbies, listen to music, or spend time with family and friends
- Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do a fun thing after a hard task
- Use time off to relax—eat a good meal, read, listen to music, take a bath, or talk to family
- Talk about your feelings to loved ones and friends

### Pay Attention to Your Body, Feelings, and Spirit:

- Recognize and pay attention to any early warning signs
- Recognize how your own past experiences affect your way of handling this event, and think of how you handled past events
- Know that feeling stressed, depressed, guilty or angry is common after a traumatic event
- Take time to renew your spirit through meditation, prayer, or helping others in need
- Consider ways to help your community recover
- Be patient with yourself and others. It may take time to feel like you have regained control over your life

## ***Know When to Get Help***

Sometimes things become so overwhelming that you need help from a mental health or substance abuse professional. If you or someone you know threatens to hurt or kill themselves or another person; talks or writes about death, dying, or suicide; feels rage, uncontrolled anger, or desires revenge; shows signs of stress (listed on these pages) for several days or weeks, **GET HELP** by calling one of the hotlines listed below. They are free, confidential, multilingual, and available 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

For more information,  
contact the  
**Missouri Department  
of Mental Health**  
Office of Disaster Services  
1706 East Elm  
P.O. Box 687  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
573-751-4122  
[www.dmh.mo.gov](http://www.dmh.mo.gov)



**Access Crisis Intervention Hotline  
for the St. Louis County area:  
1-800-811-4760**

**Disaster Distress Helpline  
Call 1-800-985-5990 or  
Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746**