

Coping with the Aftermath of Natural Disasters



Experiencing a natural disaster can be traumatic—emotionally, physically, and academically. Whether you've been displaced, lost loved ones, or are struggling to keep up, support is available. Here's what you can do now to begin healing and get back on track.

It's okay to not be okay. You might feel shocked, grief, guilt, anger, or anxiety—all are normal.

Signs you should seek support.

- Feeling of being a danger to yourself or others.
- Chest pain, trouble breathing, heart palpitations (contact a doctor immediately).
- Disturbing symptoms including:
 - Amnesia.
 - Feeling completely overwhelmed and incapable of doing anything.
 - Being disabled by intense thoughts, feelings, flashbacks, or physical sensations.
 - Sudden flashbacks to the event.
- Repeated, distressing memories or dreams.
- A previous history of mental illness and psychiatric treatment.
- Using drugs or alcohol to keep going or to get to sleep.

If you continue to experience the following symptoms for more than four weeks after the event — and they are distressing or interfering with your academic, social, or daily functioning consider reaching out to a campus counselor, student health service, or another mental health professional:

- Constantly staying busy to avoid thinking about the event
- Sudden flashbacks or vivid memories of the event
- Feeling the need to take time away from studies or classes
- Difficulty concentrating or a noticeable drop in academic performance
- Overreacting to feedback or criticism
- Losing interest in relationships, activities, or goals that once mattered to you
- Feeling emotionally numb, disconnected, or different from others
- Experiencing loneliness or feeling isolated from peers
- Avoiding conversations, places, or situations that remind you of the event
- Feeling persistently tired or low in energy
- Being constantly on edge, easily startled, or hyper-aware of your surroundings
- Recurring dreams or intrusive thoughts about the experience

If you're concerned about how, you or someone else is coping, don't hesitate to speak with a mental health professional, campus support service, or trusted advisor.

At TELUS Health Student Support, we're always here to help.

Need assistance?

