



Disasters often strike with little or no warning. In an instant, your home and community can be damaged or destroyed and forever changed. Even if your home or business does not suffer directly, no one who experiences a disaster is untouched by it.

For many, a disaster continues as a very real presence even long after it has passed. Feelings of sadness, depression, frustration, anger, and anxiety are common.

It is not unusual for these feelings to last for many months. Learning to recognize the normal reactions and emotions that occur can help you better understand these feelings and become more comfortable and effective in coping with them.

The following information explains the range of feelings and behaviors you can expect and how you, your family, friends, and neighbors can best help yourselves and each other during this time of recovery.

- Take time to talk with children about their experiences. Listen to what they have to say and let them freely express their feelings.
- Moving back home (once it is repaired) can bring mixed emotions such as relief and joy as well as sadness and fear. These are normal feelings and reactions.
- During the first year following a tornado, many calendar events such as birthdays and holidays can arouse emotions such as sadness and distress.
- If stress, anxiety, depression, or physical problems increase, persist, or interfere with your regular activities, you should consult a physician or a mental health professional, or call the local telephone number on the front of this brochure.

*Adapted from information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Center for Mental Health Services, and Victim Services of the Texas Department of Public Safety.


disaster recovery

Recovering from
the Emotional
Aftermath of
Tornado


Project
Rebound

Contact us: 833-309-5568

Why do I feel the way I do?

It is very common for people to experience a wide range of emotional reactions to a tornado.

However, it is extremely important to remember that they are **NORMAL REACTIONS TO AN ABNORMAL EVENT**. You have been through an exceptionally stressful situation and these emotional reactions may continue for many months following the tornado.

Things to look for...

YOUR BEHAVIORS

- **Having problems falling or staying asleep**
- **Isolating yourself or withdrawing from others**
- **Keeping excessively busy and preoccupied to avoid the unpleasant effects of the tornado**
- **At times, becoming overly alert or easily startled**
- **Experiencing an increase or decrease in your normal appetite**
- **Drinking alcoholic beverages more**

YOUR FEELINGS

- “Just not yourself,” out of balance, or easily upset
- Loss of interest in everyday activities
- A sense of despair, hopelessness, or emptiness about the future
- Anxiety or fear, especially when things remind you of the tornado
- Depression, sadness, or feeling down much of the time

YOUR THOUGHTS

- Trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Difficulty with making decisions
- Frequent replaying of the events and circumstances of the tornado in your mind
- Recurring dreams or nightmares about the tornado
- Questioning of your spiritual or religious beliefs

How to cope and what works...

FOR YOURSELF

- Talk to others about how you are feeling.
- Don't overwork yourself. Take time off from repairs to be with your family.

- Seek out and maintain connections with your community, friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, or people who attend your place of worship.
- Maintain a good diet and make sure you are getting enough sleep. It is also helpful to be physically active or exercise.
- Upsetting times can cause some people to use alcohol or drugs to cope with the stress. It does not help in the long run and will likely cause other problems.

FOR FAMILY

- Families should keep some routines in place such as regular meals, certain enjoyable activities, and other family rituals.
- Couples should take time to be alone, as a couple, to talk about how you are feeling, and to have fun together.