



## When A Natural Disaster Strikes

A natural disaster often causes more than property damage. It also brings a flood of emotions. It is important to understand what these reactions may be and learn how to cope with them.

### Emotional Reactions After a Traumatic Event

After a traumatic experience, many people feel stunned, shocked, as though what they experienced simply wasn't real. Reactions like these are normal and allow you to get through the immediate event. After the initial feelings of shock, numbness and disbelief lessen, you can feel a variety of other reactions depending on your own temperament and past experiences. The following responses, although distressing, are normal reactions to traumatic events:

- **Anxiety, nervousness and irritability.** These feelings may be intense.
- **Depression.** You may feel overwhelmed by sadness and grief.
- **Anger.** You may feel a more generalized anger.
- **Mood swings.** For some these can be dramatic and unpredictable.
- **Flashbacks.** You may find yourself experiencing flashbacks without warning. During a flashback it is common to sweat and feel your heart racing.
- **Behavior changes.** You may find it difficult to concentrate or make decisions. You may forget to eat or not feel hungry. You may find it hard to get to sleep or to stay asleep.

### Ways to Cope

Below are a few things that you can do to help restore your sense of control and well-being:

- **Get support from people you love and trust.**
- **Give yourself time.** You have suffered from a tremendous shock and can't be expected to "bounce back" quickly. Be patient with yourself.
- **Try not to compare yourself with others.** Everyone reacts differently to traumatic experiences.
- **Consider joining a support group.** Talking with others who have undergone traumatic experiences can be helpful, especially if you don't have supportive friends and family nearby. Ask your EAP to help you find a group.

### ACCESSING YOUR BENEFITS



Accessing your EAP benefits begins with a call to BHS. Your BHS Care Coordinator is available Monday-Friday from 7:00-5:30 CT by calling 800-245-1150.

For more information, visit:  
[behavioralhealthsystems.com](http://behavioralhealthsystems.com).

Login to MemberAccess to learn more about your EAP resources.



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