

# Wildfires: Protect Your Emotional Well-Being

After a disaster, such as a wildfire, you may feel sad, angry, guilty, or numb. You may have trouble sleeping, be constantly watching for danger, or be jumpy, irritable, or angry. Contact with certain people, sights, or sounds may bring back bad memories or an overwhelming sense of grief. These are all normal reactions to stress, anxiety and fear during disasters. Here are some coping strategies you can take to aid in your recovery:

## 1. Manage Your Stress

- Stay informed. Limit media exposure.
- Eat healthy meals, stay hydrated and get adequate sleep.
- Stay active. Exercise (indoors if air quality is not acceptable).
- Make time for recreation and relaxation.

## 2. Prepare Yourself and Your Family

- Attend community meetings for resources/education.
- Give honest age-appropriate information to children.
- Become familiar with local medical and mental health resources in your community.
- Stay calm! Children look to you to interpret confusing events.

## 3. Connect With Your Community

- Keep contact with family and friends.
- Join a community or religious group.
- Accept help from family, friends, co-workers and clergy.
- Reach out to neighbors and friends with access and functional needs that may need your assistance.

## 4. Reach Out and Help

- Become involved in the recovery process. Helping others heal can be beneficial to one's own recovery.
- Help with cleanup and repair if it is safe to do so.
- Find out what's needed and how you can be of most help.
- Talk about your feelings.

## 5. Seek Professional Help if You are Struggling with

- Managing your feelings.
- Completing daily tasks.
- Interpersonal relationships.
- Performing your job duties.

If you or a loved one is having difficulty coping consider seeking professional help.



## Be Proactive!

1. Prepare yourself and your family for emergencies.
2. Set up strong social support networks.
3. Help others in need by volunteering and donating time and resources to trusted organizations.
4. Keep a positive attitude and outlook.

## Resources

Los Angeles County  
Department of Mental Health  
Access Center 24/7 Helpline  
(800) 854-7771

Center for Disease Control and  
Prevention

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/pdf/afterfire.pdf>

Los Angeles County  
Department of Public Health:  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/prp/media/index.htm>