



# Riots Toolkit

*Support for you and your loved ones in the event of rioting or civil unrest in your community.*

## We are Here to Help.

*Mental health and well-being resources to help you stay balanced during an emotionally challenging time.*



## Stay Safe During Rioting and Civil Unrest

In recent times, we have witnessed civil unrest and riots in many cities around the world. Even if you're not involved directly, these events can be unsettling and scary when they happen in your community.

The First Amendment gives Americans the right to assemble and express their views, but this right comes in different forms.

- Peaceful protests are when people unite to express their grievances, beliefs, and ideas without violence.
- Civil unrest is when people demonstrate against an authority or government intending to bring about change.
- Rioting is when a group gathers and commits acts of violence, destruction, and disruption.
- Peaceful protests and civil unrest are usually planned events, while rioting is often spontaneous and a response to an event.

## Exercising Your Rights: How to Protest Safely

In a time of massive civil unrest and political upheaval, protesting can be a way to influence government, bring justice to light, or enact environmental reform. It's essential to know your rights, make a plan, and take necessary precautions to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

Learn how to plan a safe protest and discover tips and advice on staying safe while protesting.

**Know Your Rights:** Research local, state, and federal protest laws. This will ensure that you are informed and can protect yourself.

**Stay Organized:** Have a plan for the protest, including who will be in charge, the goals, and who will be in attendance.

**Know Your Exit:** Know where the exits and emergency services are located and be aware of potential hazards.

**Stay Off Social Media:** Keeping personal information off social media is crucial, as it can be used against you in court.

**Dress Appropriately:** Wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move freely and easily. Make sure to wear something visible and easily identifiable.

**Document the Protest:** Take pictures and videos to document the events and the actions of those involved.

**Stay Safe:** Make sure to stay safe during the protest. Keep a safe distance from potential threats and charge your phone in an emergency.





## How To Stay Safe During Rioting

As the world continues to grapple with issues of social justice and inequality, there is an increasing risk that protests can turn into riots. While it's important to show solidarity with the cause, staying safe during such a complex and potentially dangerous situation is also essential. Here are a few ways to keep safe if rioting occurs in your community.

**Stay Informed:** Follow news reports, social media, and other sources to stay current on the latest information related to the rioting.

**Know Your Rights:** Ensure you understand your rights if you are arrested, stopped by police, or asked to leave an area.

**Stay Indoors:** Whenever possible, avoid going outdoors during a riot. If you must go outside, be sure to stay away from areas where large groups of people are gathering.

**Have a Plan:** Make sure you have a plan in place in case of an emergency, including evacuation routes and safe places to go.

**Be Prepared:** In an emergency, have essential supplies such as food, water, and a first aid kit.

**Stay Calm:** Remain calm and stay aware of your surroundings. Avoid any activities that may escalate the situation.

**Help Others:** If you can, help those in need by offering assistance or resources.







## Mental Health Support After Rioting

The after-effects of riots, protests, and civil unrest can cause lasting mental and emotional trauma, particularly for those directly affected by the events.

Providing a safe and secure environment for those who require mental and emotional support is essential. Here are a few tips to help you find peace and healing.

- Find a therapist specializing in trauma and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to help you process your experience.
- Join a support group to connect with other people who are going through the same experience.
- Seek out mental health resources specific to your community, as these can be more tailored to your needs.
- Surround yourself with positive people who can offer emotional support and understanding.
- Take time for yourself to reflect and renew your energy.
- Engage in self-care activities, such as yoga, meditation, or journaling.
- Focus on your physical health by eating nutritious foods and getting plenty of sleep.





## Friends & Family Can Help After a Traumatic Event

### Help Them Support You

Your friends and family can offer you support after experiencing a traumatic event. They will be very concerned about you, and you can help them support you by letting them know how you are feeling. Even though they care, they didn't experience the trauma with you. It's okay to remind them about your experience and ask them to be patient as you recover. This will help them help you. Share this toolkit with them so they know what to expect and how they can offer support as you need it.

### Explain Your Feelings

Tell your friends and family you have gone through a traumatic experience. Let them know that you will need their support and understanding to cope and recover, and that it may be weeks, or even months, before the effects of this experience have diminished. Also let them know you may be experiencing some of the following feelings and behaviors:

- Increased anxiety or fear
- Short temper or irritability
- Nightmares and sleep problems
- Confusion and/or short term memory loss
- Difficulty making decisions
- Fear of being alone
- Physical aches and pains
- Tendency to withdraw

### Tell Friends & Family How They Can Help

"I might be feeling or acting differently for a while. Here are some ways you can help when I'm struggling:"

- Be patient - don't just tell me to think positive
- Listen and try to understand my feelings
- Ask how you can help
- Temporarily take over some of my responsibilities
- Help me feel safe again: (*Drive me to work, help me feel safe by installing new safety precautions at home such as door locks, run errands with me, or just spend some extra time with me.*)

**A traumatic event can trigger memories of other unrelated traumas, such as an illness, injury, or the past death of a loved one.** If you are having other traumatic memories, tell someone. Your friends and family can only help if they know what you are dealing with. So if your feelings or behaviors are changing or getting worse, let someone know so they can support your needs.

If you don't feel comfortable talking to your friends and family, or if you need more help than they can offer, you should **reach out to professionals by calling the EAP.**

## 21 Things You Can Do While You're Living Through a Traumatic Experience

1. Take immediate action to ensure your safety and the safety of others. If it's possible, remove yourself from the event/scene in order to avoid further traumatic exposure.
2. Address your acute medical needs (e.g., If you're having difficulty breathing, experiencing chest pains or palpitations, seek immediate medical attention).
3. Find a safe place that offers shelter, water, food, and sanitation.
4. Become aware of how the event is affecting you (i.e., your feelings, thoughts, actions, and your physical and spiritual reactions).
5. Know that your reactions are normal responses to an abnormal event. You are not "losing it" or "going crazy."
6. Speak with your physician or healthcare provider and make him/her aware of what has happened to you.
7. Be aware of how you're holding-up when there are children around you. Children will take their cues from the adults around them.
8. Try to obtain information. Knowing the facts about what has happened will help you to keep functioning.
9. If possible, surround yourself with family and loved ones. Realize that the event could be affecting them, too.
10. Tell your story. And, allow yourself to feel. It's okay not to be okay during a traumatic experience.
11. You may experience a desire to withdraw and isolate, causing a strain on significant others. Resist the urge to shut down and retreat into your own world.
12. Traumatic stress may compromise your ability to think clearly. If you find it difficult to concentrate when someone is speaking to you, focus on the specific words they are saying and work to actively listen. Slow down the conversation and try repeating what you have just heard.
13. Don't make important decisions when you're feeling overwhelmed. Allow trusted family members or friends to assist you with necessary decision-making.
14. If stress is causing you to react physically, use controlled breathing techniques to stabilize yourself. Take a slow deep breath by inhaling through your nose, hold your breath for 5 seconds and then exhale through your mouth. Upon exhalation, think the words "relax," "let go," or "I'm handling this." Repeat this process several times.
15. Realize that repetitive thinking and sleep difficulties are normal reactions. Don't fight the sleep difficulty. Try the following: Eliminate caffeine 4 hours prior to your bedtime, create the best sleep environment you can, consider taking a few moments before turning out the lights to write down your thoughts thus emptying your mind.
16. Give yourself permission to rest, relax, and engage in non-threatening activity. Read, listen to music, consider taking a warm bath, etc.
17. Physical exercise may help to dissipate the stress energy that has been generated by your experience. Take a walk, ride a bike, or swim.
18. Create a journal. Writing about your experience may help to expose yourself to painful thoughts and feelings and, ultimately, enable you to assimilate your experience.
19. If you find that your experience is too powerful, allow yourself the advantage of professional and/or spiritual guidance, support, and education.
20. Try to maintain your schedule. Traumatic events will disrupt the sense of normalcy. We are all creatures of habit. By maintaining our routines, we can maintain a sense of control at a time when circumstances may lead us to feel a loss of control.
21. Crises present opportunities. Cultivate a mission and purpose. Seize the energy from your experience and use it to propel you to set realistic goals, make decisions, and take action.

Source: American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress





## We Are Here to Help

EAP benefits are available to all employees and their families at NO COST to you. The EAP offers confidential advice, support, and practical solutions to help you through your grief and loss. You can access these confidential services by calling the toll-free number below and speaking with our care team or accessing online.

### Short-Term Therapy

For a deeper level of support, members can request short-term therapy by calling Uprise Health. Our nationwide provider network of more than 60,000 counselors can be filtered by criteria including geography, clinical specialty, cultural background, and other preferences, to ensure a perfect fit for you. After speaking with our care team, you will be provided with a list of providers. You can schedule an appointment yourself or ask the care team for assistance scheduling.

### 24-hour Crisis Support

During business hours, members who are in crisis are connected with an Uprise Health clinician who will stabilize your situation and refer you to appropriate support. After-hours calls are answered by behavioral health professionals located within the U.S. If you are in life threatening situation, please call 9-1-1 as you would do for any other medical/life emergency.

### Online Peer Support Groups

As part of your EAP program, you can request up to 10 online peer support groups where you will have a safe and confidential place to speak with others who have similar issues. Please call Uprise Health and speak with our care team to learn more about the Grief and Loss support group.

### Resources

[Staying Safe During Civil Unrest](#)  
[5 Ways to Stay Safe During a Riot](#)  
[ACLU: Know Your Rights](#)



### Contact Uprise Health

Call: 1-800-395-1616

Visit: [members.uprisehealth.com](https://members.uprisehealth.com)