



# Wildfire Toolkit

We are Here to Help.

*Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources to help you stay balanced during an emotionally challenging time.*



## During a Wildfire

**If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Take your disaster supply kit, lock your home, and choose a route away from the fire hazard. Watch for changes in the speed and direction of the fire and smoke. Tell someone when you leave and where you are going.**

If you see a wildfire and haven't received evacuation orders yet, call 9-1-1. Don't assume that someone else has already called. Describe the location of the fire, speak slowly and clearly, and answer any questions asked by the dispatcher. If you are not ordered to evacuate, and have time to prepare your home, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends you take the following actions:

- Arrange temporary housing at a friend or relative's home outside the threatened area in case you need to evacuate.
- Wear protective clothing when outside—sturdy shoes, cotton or woolen clothes, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, gloves, and a handkerchief to protect your face.
- Gather fire tools such as a rake, axe, handsaw or chainsaw, bucket and shovel.
- Close outside attic, eaves and basement vents, windows, doors, pet doors, etc. Remove flammable drapes and curtains. Close all shutters, blinds, and heavy non-combustible window coverings to reduce radiant heat.
- Close all doors inside the house to prevent draft. Open the damper on your fireplace, but close the fireplace screen.
- Shut off any natural gas, propane, and fuel oil supplies at the source.
- Connect garden hoses to outdoor water faucet and fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs, and other large containers with water.
- Place lawn sprinklers on the roof and near above-ground fuel tanks. Leave sprinklers on and douse these structures as long as possible.
- If you have gas-powered pumps for water, make sure they are fueled and ready.
- Place a ladder against the house in clear view.
- Disconnect any automatic garage door openers so that doors can still be opened by hand if the power goes out. Close all garage doors.
- Place valuable papers, mementos, and anything "you can't live without" inside the car in the garage, ready for quick departure. Any pets still with you should also be put in the car.
- Place valuables that will not be damaged by water in a pool or pond.
- Move flammable furniture into the center of the residence away from the windows and sliding-glass doors.
- Turn on outside lights and leave a light on in every room to make the house more visible in heavy smoke.

Source: ready.gov ©2022



## 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©2022

## Helpful Wildfire Resources

### California

- **CAL OES - Governor's Office of Emergency Services - Statewide:** <https://wildfirerecovery.caloes.ca.gov/>
- **California Wildfires: Emergency Preparedness & Resources:** <https://www.neha.org/node/60181>
- **CAL FIRE:** <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/>
- **AARP California Wildfire Resources:** <https://states.aarp.org/california/california-wildfire-resources>
- **AIA: Wildfire Recovery Resources:** <https://www.aia.org/pages/165776-wildfire-recovery-resources>
- **University of California: Wildfire Preparation:** <https://ucanr.edu/sites/fire/Prepare/>
- **California Wildfire Map** <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/>

### Oregon

- **Oregon Wildfire and Smoke Map:** <https://data.statesmanjournal.com/fires/>
- **InciWeb: Detailed Information System Wildfires:** <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>
- **Oregon Wildfire Response and Recovery:** <https://wildfire.oregon.gov/>
- **Oregon Department of Forestry:** <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Special Districts Association of Oregon - Wildfire Resources:** <https://www.sdao.com/wildfire-resources>
- **NW Fire Science Consortium:** <http://www.nwfirescience.org/current-fire-information>
- **Oregon Wildfires 2021 Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1481912815460351/>

### Washington

- **WA Dept. of Natural Resources:** <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/wildfire-resources>
- **Wildfire Resources:** <https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/washington-wildfire-resources>
- **Washington Wildfire Map:** <https://www.fireweatheravalanche.org/fire/state/washington>

### Evacuation Resources

- **Evacuation Readiness Guide - Ready.gov:** <https://www.ready.gov/evacuation>
- **Wildfire Readiness Resources - Ready.gov:** <https://www.ready.gov/wildfires>

### Additional Resources

- **Wildfire Recovery: Emotional Support Resource:** <https://www.apa.org/topics/disasters-response/wildfires>
- **Extreme Heat:** <https://www.ready.gov/heat>
- **Wildfire Public Alerts 2021:** <https://www.publicalerts.org/hazards/wildfire-2021>



## 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 Counseling

For a deeper level of support, members can request short-term counseling 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.



Phone: 800-395-1616

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