

# Preparedness Includes Emotional Health

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – As survivors of Hurricane María prepare for the height of hurricane season, many may be experiencing stress from the suffering of last season. It's normal to feel overwhelmed or anxious about your family's safety. Some common reactions to disasters are disbelief and shock, fear and anxiety, sadness and depression and feeling powerless. Sometimes the emotional toll can be even more devastating than the financial strains caused by the damage or loss of property.

Every person's healing process is different and most of these reactions are temporary. Focus on your strengths and abilities to keep the process moving forward. Here are some tips that can help.

- Prepare for any disaster-related emergency.
- Help others if you can.
- Talk about your experience.
- Stay connected with family and friends.
- Find a support group.
- Recognize your and your family's emotional history.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Set priorities.
- Start or restore routines.
- Engage in healthy behaviors.
- Maintain a hopeful attitude.

If your emotional health gets worse or persists for prolonged periods of time, it might be helpful to seek assistance from a counselor or get professional help. On the other hand, people who have existing mental health problems should check in with a mental health care professional. You can also seek help calling Línea PAS at 800-981-0023, TTY 888-672-7622.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline provides crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.



- 24/7 Phone: 800-985-5990 (multilingual) - For Spanish, press "2"
- Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746 (Spanish speakers text "Hablanos")
  - From Puerto Rico or U.S. Virgin Islands, text to 212-461-4635
- The deaf, hard of hearing or people with speech abilities can utilize the texting option, connect with a DDH counselor via TTY at 800-846-8517.
- Website: [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline)

For more information on hurricane preparedness, visit  
[www.fema.gov/disaster/4339/hurricane-preparedness](http://www.fema.gov/disaster/4339/hurricane-preparedness).

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362) 711/VRS - Video Relay Service). Multilingual operators are available. (Press 2 for Spanish). TTY call 800-462-7585.

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