

# Coping During the Holidays After the Hurricanes

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Holidays can bring about stress any year, but hurricanes and COVID-19 add a whole new level of uncertainty and frustration. Typical holiday stresses, like trying to gather loved ones together, are compounded by new challenges such as lack of food and/or housing.

With these problems it is important to check on the emotional wellbeing of yourself, your loved ones, and your neighbors. Being aware of the signs of distress can help us choose healthier ways to relieve stress.

It is normal to feel sad after bad things happen. It is a sign of strength to reach out to others to help the people you care about. Typical signs of holiday-related stress are:

- Feeling sad during the holiday season;
- Feeling physically and/or mentally tired;
- Struggling to communicate with others or having difficulty answering questions;
- Excessive worry;
- Difficulty making decisions or concentrating;
- Changes in appetite or sleeping more or less than normal; or
- Increased use of alcohol or other substances.

If you or a loved one is feeling down, has anxiety or acting unsafely, the Crisis Counseling hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 800-985-5990 (TTY 800-846-8517) or text TalkWithUs (Spanish-speakers text: Hablanos) to 66746 to be immediately connected with a professional counselor who will help callers through disaster-related emotional distress. This toll-free, multilingual and confidential free service is available to everyone in the state.



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Another Louisiana resource for crisis counseling is VIA LINK. The agency offers free counseling, information and referrals, 24 hours a day, to help with needs such as food, shelter, medical care, financial assistance, mental health, substance abuse, senior services and childcare. For assistance, call 800-749-2673, dial 2-1-1, or visit <https://vialink.org/>.

### **Other Crisis Counseling Resources:**

The Keep Calm Through COVID crisis phone line provides trained counselors to support Louisianans, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This free, confidential hotline links hurricane survivors to mental health and substance abuse counseling services. Call 866-310-7977.

Also, the Domestic Violence Louisiana Hotline is 888-411-1333. This crisis phone line is the federally designated statewide coalition of shelters, nonresidential programs and individuals working to end domestic violence in Louisiana. And you can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline by calling 800-799-7233.

Veterans, service members and their families and friends may call the Veterans Crisis Hotline at 800-273-8255, text 838255 or visit <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>. Confidential support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Free suicide-prevention counseling is available online at [suicidehotlines.com/louisiana.html](https://suicidehotlines.com/louisiana.html).

For the latest information on Hurricane Delta, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4570](https://fema.gov/disaster/4570). For the latest information on Hurricane Laura, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4559](https://fema.gov/disaster/4559). Or, follow the



FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at [twitter.com/FEMARegion6](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion6).



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