Los Angeles County
Department of Mental Health
ACCESS Center
Available 24/7 including holidays
1(800) 854-7771

Other Resources
The American Red Cross
Redcross.org

CERT-Los Angeles Emergency Survival Program
http://www.cert-la.com/esp.htm

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
lapublichealth.org

Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness
(323) 478-8000

Department on Disability
disability.lacity.org

Los Angeles County Information Line
Dial 211

Disaster Resources
Los Angeles County and U.S.

Coping with a Disaster
Nurturing Hope, Promoting Wellness and Supporting Recovery

Emergency Outreach Bureau
Disaster Services Unit
550 South Vermont Avenue, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90020
213-738-4919
dmh.lacounty.gov

Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.
Director

Hilda L. Solis
First District
Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District
Sheila Kuehl
Third District
Janice Hahn
Fourth District
Kathryn Barger
Fifth District
Sachi A. Hamai
CEO

Los Angeles County
Department of Mental Health
Community and Government Relations Division
Public Information Officer
550 South Vermont Avenue, 6th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90020
213-738-3700
dmh.lacounty.gov
Disasters may strike at any time and may leave people feeling frightened, upset and powerless. Firestorms, earthquakes, flood or man-made disasters are drastic and intense experiences that can cause major interruptions in the natural flow of life. The emotional and physical impact can be overwhelming, causing reactions that may otherwise not exist. Reactions to these events may show up immediately or they may appear weeks, even months later.

The Role of Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
The department of Mental Health will respond to the psychological needs of survivors and their families, first responders and their families, the community at large and maintain continuity of care in its clinics.

How can we prepare for a disaster now?
- Have a family plan.
- Identify a meeting location for the whole family to meet.
- Know what your place of employment will do in the event of a disaster.
- Familiarize yourself with your children’s school emergency plans.

What Should I do During and After a Disaster?
In the event of and following a disaster, maintain as many familiar routines as possible. People derive a sense of security from established patterns. Provide reassurance to your loved ones (children especially require physical contact, comfort and affection). An emotionally supportive environment can minimize the negative effects of disturbing events. If you have a family member or friend with a disability and/or access and functional needs, have a plan in place that accommodates those needs. Keep yourself updated with the event as it unfolds.

Immediate Reactions
- Fear and anxiety about the safety and well-being of loved ones, friends and co-workers.
- Trauma reactions such as fearfulness, numbness, jumpiness, sleep and concentration problems, and replaying images and sounds.

Immediate Needs
- Physical need for warmth, safety, rest, fluids and food.
- Need for connection with loved ones and support system.

Coping with the Event
- Talk opening about feelings of fear, anxiety & irritability
- Maintain a healthy diet
- Engage in physical activity
- Make time for relaxation—encourage contact with friends and rehearse safety measures.

Long-term Impact
The emotional stress may go beyond the immediate impact of the initial destruction. Disasters affect individuals emotionally, may change relationships, disrupt work, and cause financial worries. Additional stressors include increased irritability, a feeling of exhaustion, illness, emotional problems and often, survivor’s guilt. If these reactions continue, seek professional help.

ACCESS CENTER HOTLINE
1-800 854-7771

Accessing Special Services
Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may call the following number for information and referral to appropriate mental health services.

562-651-2549 TDD/TTY