

# Coping with Stress from Natural Disasters

Natural disasters, like wildfires, can be emotionally challenging for you and your whole family. Taking care of yourself is the first step to supporting children and can create a sense of safety and comfort. Use these tips to help manage stress during difficult times.

## 1. Take Care of Yourself First

Feeling overwhelmed? Focus on what you can control:

<b>Stay connected</b>	Reach out to friends, family or support networks.
<b>Get rest</b>	Sleep is essential for your strength.
<b>Move your body</b>	Gentle stretching or light activity can help relieve stress.
<b>Eat well-balanced meals and snacks</b>	Nutritious meals and snacks help fuel your body and mind.

## 2. Help Your Kids Feel Safe

Children look to you for comfort and reassurance. Here's how to help them feel more secure:

<b>Move with them</b>	Dance, wiggle or shake it off! Movement can be fun and can relieve stress.
<b>Create calm</b>	Slow down together. Hug, read, share stories or listen to soothing music.
<b>Encourage expression</b>	Check in with children about their feelings. Share simple and honest facts about what has happened. Help them identify and label emotions to promote a sense of calm.
<b>Stick to routines</b>	Small routines like mealtimes and bedtime provide stability.
<b>Be present</b>	Making eye contact and using a calm voice helps children feel loved and safe.

## 3. Get & Give Support

You don't have to do it all alone. Remember, help is available.

**Give support:** Check in on friends, donate money or clothes or volunteer your time.

**Accept support:** Be open to asking for help when needed. For immediate crisis support, contact the **Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990** or the **988 Lifeline at 988**.



For more wildfire information and resources visit the [Wildfires & Mental Health](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/WildfireMentalHealth) page.  
[go.cdph.ca.gov/WildfireMentalHealth](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/WildfireMentalHealth)

