



Help Starts Here.

Washington State Employee Assistance Program

Wildfires in Southern California : SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Suggestions for Caring for Yourself and Loved Ones

- **Acknowledge your thoughts and emotions.** It is common to experience a wide range of emotions following a disaster. Avoid self-talk about what you “should” be feeling.
- **Reach out to family, friends, and community.** Talk with trusted people in your life about how you are doing. Seek support from your community and faith-based resources, if applicable.
- **Set boundaries around when and how often you consume media.** Constant access to news and social media means that we can easily become overloaded by bad news. You might make a conscious choice not to watch the news right before bedtime. You might decide to leave your phone charging in another room, so you don’t check social media during a meal, at work, or from bed. You may want to set a timer and limit access to newsfeeds to limited blocks of time.
- **Identify things within your scope of influence.** It is easy to feel helpless in overwhelming situations, so it can be useful to focus on what you can do. How can you most directly and positively make an impact? This could include actions like donating to a credible relief organization, checking in on someone you feel concerned about or volunteering with a relevant cause or group.
- **Take care of your physical health.** Remember to move yet be conscious of the air quality that surrounds you. It’s not just that exercise can help us feel physically better. Trauma tends to “get stuck” in our bodies and choosing to move can help shift hard feelings. Try any movement that works for your body. Eat healthy foods and get adequate sleep and rest when you can.
- **Be gentle with yourself.** Know that you are not alone in experiencing strong reactions to these events. Don’t despair if you are having a hard time concentrating at work or keeping your cool with your partner or kids. What’s one thing you can do to be kind to yourself today?
- **Seek out and use supportive resources.** Ask for support and help from the people, places and programs that are helpful to you.

Resources

- [Donating to the American Red Cross](#) - [Red Cross helping as fires destroy entire California neighborhoods](#)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) [Washington](#) – individual and family mental health support groups, resources, and education.
- [Washington State Employee Assistance Program](#) – the EAP is available 24/7



Help Starts Here.

Washington State Employee Assistance Program

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES (continued)

Articles and Resources

- [Tips for Managing Your Distress Related to Wildfires](#) (APA)
- [Coping Tips for Traumatic Events and Disasters](#) (SAMHSA)
- [Coping with Wildfires and Climate Change Crises](#) (UCSF)
- [Helping an Employee in Distress](#) (Harvard Business Review)
- [Parent Guidelines for Helping Children Impacted by Wildfires](#) (NCTSN)
- [Wildfires: Tips for Parents on Media Coverage](#) (NCTSN)

Crisis Support

Mental Health Crises

The below resources provide support when you or someone you care for is in crisis.

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) – 24-hour crisis line, dial 988
- [Crisis Text Line](#) – to connect with a crisis counselor, text 988
- [Disaster Distress Helpline](#) - national hotline dedicated to providing year-round disaster crisis counseling, call 800-985-5990

Substance Use

Stress can result in unhealthy ways of coping, including alcohol and substance use. Below are some resources to get support.

- [Alcohol and Substance Use](#) (SAMHSA)
- [Rethinking Drinking](#) (National Institutes of Health)