

NEWS RELEASE

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Self-Care in Times of High Anxiety

Natural disasters disrupt lives in significant and unexpected ways including physical and mental health. Floods create a tremendous amount of anxiety and stress for those affected both directly and indirectly.

Common reactions to floods or other natural disasters may include:

- Disbelief and shock
- Fear and anxiety
- Feeling powerless
- Sadness and depression
- Irritability and anger
- Headaches
- Stomach pain
- Increased use of alcohol and other drugs

It is normal to struggle with your emotions before, during, and after a flood because there is so much we can't control. To help cope during such a stressful time you should maintain control over what you can by:

- Connecting with friends and family: Talk and support each other. Now is when talking and supporting is most important.
- Taking care of yourself: Try to maintain some routine. Make sure you rest and drink plenty of water.
- Doing what you enjoy: Take a walk, read a book, or do an activity that helps you feel connected to yourself.

If you sense that your feelings are too strong for you to cope, you may need to speak with a medical or mental health professional. Sometimes the coping skills we've created are no longer effective and talking with someone can provide support and resources. As time goes on and you start to return to a normal routine your anxiety should start to diminish. If it does not, you should reach out to a professional for additional support.

- Crisis counselors are always available by calling Foundation 2, the local crisis center at **(319) 362-2174**.
- If you are in need of a referral or flood information, call **2-1-1**. You can call this number from most landlines. Unfortunately some cellphone carriers and VOIPs do not recognize the short code 2-1-1. If you are unable to use the short code, please call **319-739-4211** or **1-866-469-2211**.

Remember that you are not alone during this time and we will come back just as strong as before.

Resources in Disasters

Numbers you can call for immediate hotline assistance:

General Public: **1-800-985-5990**

Veterans: **1-800-273-8255**

Other Important electronic resources

- emergency.cdc.gov/coping/index.asp - CDC information on coping in disasters
- redcross.org/find-help/disaster-recovery/recovering-emotionally - An excellent Red Cross fact sheet that assists people in finding assistance and working to recover after disaster.
- dshs.state.tx.us/preparedness/factsheet_elderly_emotional_recovery.pdf - A preparedness and response worksheet that is particularly helpful to address the needs of older adults.
- store.samhsa.gov/apps/disaster - Access critical, disaster-related behavioral health resources right from your phone with the SAMHSA Disaster App.

Linn Area Partners – Active in Disaster (LAP-AID) is a joint effort of many organizations dedicated to building a better prepared Linn County. In response to the 2008 flood, more than 70 organizations worked to bring dollars, resources and services to Linn County. From that effort, Linn Area Partners – Active in Disaster (LAP-AID) formed to be ready in the event disaster struck again. LAP-AID aims to empower communities, expedite local response, improve management of volunteers and donations and provide resource for facilitating long-term recovery.