

# Natural Disasters & Children's Mental Health



Hurricanes, wildfires, flooding and other types of natural disasters hit all parts of North Carolina and can affect the mental health of both adults and youth. Children and teens are often less familiar than adults with high-stress events and not as prepared to cope.

Mental health guidance is available for caregivers to help youth process natural disasters, manage their emotions and decide if extra support is needed. Age-appropriate mental health resources are also available for children and teens, as well as specialized resources for those living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



## Ways for parents and caregivers to support youth mental and emotional health before and after a natural disaster

- Explain emergency plans and include them in disaster preparation
- Have conversations to understand how they feel
- Keep them connected to friends and family
- Stick to normal routines, as much as possible
- Enjoy fun, stress-relieving activities together
- Take regular breaks from news coverage
- Continue recommended medications and treatments
- Connect them with mental health resources and professionals for more support, if needed

### RESOURCES

- General Information: [CDC.gov/ChildrenInDisasters](https://www.cdc.gov/ChildrenInDisasters)
- Planning Ahead: [Ready.gov/Kids](https://www.ready.gov/kids)
- Trauma Guidance: [bit.ly/ChildTraumaDisasters](https://www.bit.ly/ChildTraumaDisasters)
- Free, 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline: 800-985-5990 (Use videophone for ASL)
- Helping Teens Cope: [bit.ly/CDCTeens](https://www.bit.ly/CDCTeens)
- Children with Disabilities: [bit.ly/BeReadyDisaster](https://www.bit.ly/BeReadyDisaster)
- Disability Guidance: [bit.ly/DisasterDisabilityGuidance](https://www.bit.ly/DisasterDisabilityGuidance)
- NC Peer Warmline: 1-855-PEERS NC (1-855-733-7762)

Print or screenshot this information to have on hand.

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# Mass Violence & Children's Mental Health



Incidents of mass violence are traumatic for communities and deeply affect youth mental health. These events can be sudden and sometimes include tragic injuries or loss of life.

It's important to be open with young people about what happened, reach out for mental health resources to guide them through recovery and find specialized support for children living with disabilities. Caregivers should also make time to support their own well-being. Your health and well-being is important to the children you care for, and it will take time after a disaster for everyone to begin to heal.



## Ways for parents and caregivers to support youth mental and emotional health before and after a mass violence event

- Follow safety guidance from local officials
- Learn and ask about their school safety drills
- Keep them connected to friends and family
- Talk about and listen to how they feel
- Stick to normal routines, as much as possible
- Take regular breaks from news coverage
- Provide honest, age-appropriate answers to questions and correct misinformation
- Continue recommended medications and treatments
- Reach out to a youth mental health professional
- Care for your own needs while providing support

### RESOURCES

- General Information: [CDC.gov/ChildrenInDisasters](https://www.cdc.gov/ChildrenInDisasters)
- How to Support Youth: [bit.ly/NIHTrauma](https://bit.ly/NIHTrauma)
- Trauma Guidance: [bit.ly/TraumaMassViolence](https://bit.ly/TraumaMassViolence)
- Caregiver Tips: [bit.ly/DisasterDisabilityGuidance](https://bit.ly/DisasterDisabilityGuidance)
- Emotional Health: [Rdcrrs.org/3Tcd6Lo](https://Rdcrrs.org/3Tcd6Lo)
- 988 Lifeline: Call/text 988, [988lifeline.org/help-yourself/youth](https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/youth)
- Free, 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline: 800-985-5990 (Use videophone for ASL)
- NC Peer Warmline: 1-855-PEERS NC (1-855-733-7762)

Resources are available to help caregivers across North Carolina support anyone under 18 years old and their mental health. It's never too early or too late to reach out for resources and support, NC. ❤️

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