



RIM Post-Crisis Mental Health Support

Best practices and tips to best help support you and your family during and after a crisis.




Dear RIM Families,

In the midst of this devastating disaster that has hit our mountain home these past couple of weeks, we hope these next few slides can provide you with some helpful tools to support you and your family. With so much going on, sometimes we forget to check-in with our mental wellbeing, which as many of us have learned in the past 3 years, can be greatly impacted by traumatic events and isolation.

Please reach out if you have any concerns or feel you may need additional support for you and/or your family.

How to Support your Child After a Crisis/Disaster



Re-establish daily routine as best as possible. Routine and a sense of normalcy can help ease fears and anxiety.

If they have questions about what is happening, provide simple and factual answers about the disaster in a calm way.

Allow the time and space for your child to talk about their feelings and concerns without interrupting them. Acknowledge and validate their feelings. Offering alternate ways for them to express themselves can be helpful. Examples may include, writing, drawing, and even music.

Giving your child specific tasks to help, allows them to feel part of the family and the community solutions during difficult times.

Spend extra time with your child(ren), being present with less technology.

During and after a crisis, teenagers may feel overwhelmed with their emotions and may not know how to express their feelings and concerns. Their feelings may reflect in their behavior, which can be immediate and sometimes after the fact.



Additional Helpful Tips to Support

Limit Media Exposure

Too much exposure to news and media coverage during and after a disaster can cause added stress and anxiety.

This is true for both children AND adults.

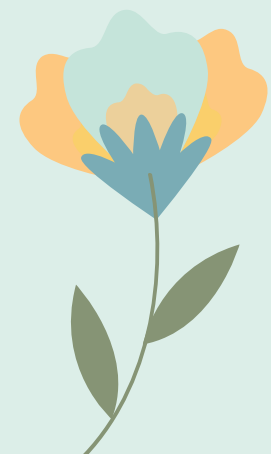


Discuss, Clarify and Plan

Parents and guardians should be available to discuss concerns and clarify misunderstandings.

Don't be afraid to admit you don't know all the answers right now.

Creating a family plan can also help to alleviate stresses and provide a sense of safety.



Emotional Support

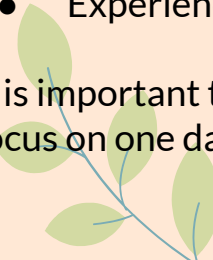


Children of different ages react in different ways to trauma. How parents and other adults react to any traumatic event can help children recover more quickly and more completely.

How people react to traumatic events and disasters can vary widely and are all normal responses to crisis. Some of these responses can include:

- Feeling physically and mentally drained
- Having difficulty making decisions or staying focused on topics
- Becoming easily frustrated on a more frequent basis
- Arguing more with family and friends
- Feeling tired, sad, numb, lonely or worried
- Experiencing changes in appetite or sleep patterns

It is important to remind yourself that these are typically temporary responses and will fade with time. Try to focus on one day at a time, with particular focus on disaster-related needs as well as your families needs.

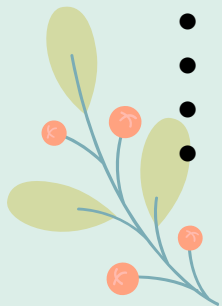


Emotional Support Continued

If you find yourself or a loved one experiencing some of the feelings and reactions listed below for **two weeks or more**, this may be a sign that you need to reach out for additional assistance.

- Crying spells or bursts of anger
- Difficulty eating
- Difficulty sleeping
- Losing interest in things
- Increased physical symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches, fatigue
- Feeling guilty, helpless or hopeless
- Avoiding family and friends
- Increased alcohol or substance use

(redcross.org)





Taking Action

Take care of your safety. Focus first on ensuring you have a safe place to stay and that your physical needs are met.

Get some rest. With so much to do, it can be difficult to rest or get adequate sleep. Giving your body and mind a break can boost your ability to cope with stress.

Reach out to others. If you find yourself in new surroundings, reach out to those around you. Giving and receiving support is important.

Stay positive. Remind yourself of how you've successfully gotten through difficult times in the past.

Be patient with yourself and with those around you. Recognize that others may be struggling to cope with the disaster and may need your patience and support.

Set priorities. Tackle tasks in small steps.

Gather information about assistance and resources that will help you and your family members meet your needs.

If you have children, give them extra time, hugs and patience. Provide them with reassurance of your family's recovery plans. Involving them in activities to assist others can help them cope.

“Let’s Chat”

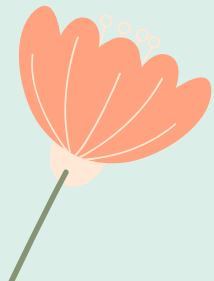
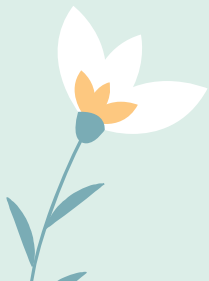
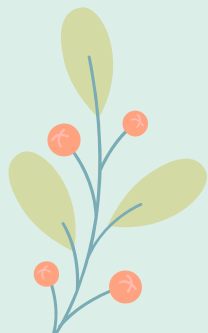
An interactive Social-Emotional Learning game that can help start some conversations about recent events and feelings.

You will need:

A pen/pencil

A piece of paper

A bowl/container



How to Play:

1. Using your pen/pencil, write numbers 1 through 18 on your piece of paper with enough space to tear each number out individually.
2. Tear each number and fold in half so you cannot see the number.
3. Place each number into your bowl.
4. Each family member takes a turn selecticting a number from the bowl and answering the questions.
5. You choose if you put the questions back for another person to answer or not.
6. **Alternatively** you could just have each member of the family pick a number between 1 and 18 and ask the corresponding question

(Questions to follow on next 3 slides)

“Let’s Chat” Game Questions

#1

Tell me about something that makes you happy

#2

Describe a perfect day

#3

What is something you do to cope with being bored?

#4

Describe something you do to relax when you are feeling stressed?

#5

Pretend I just handed you a “feelings” thermometer. What would it say right now? (the higher the rating, the more intense the feeling)

#6

What is something that really gets on your nerves? Why?

“Lets Chat” Game Questions cont.

#7

What is the hardest thing you have ever had to do?

#8

What is your favorite thing about school?

#9

What do you miss most about your friends when they are not around?

#10

What is your most favorite possession and why?

#11

Tell me about a food you never get tired of eating.

#12

What is your favorite non-technology activity to do?



“Lets Chat” Game Questions cont.

#13

What’s the hardest part about being cooped up inside all day?

#14

If you could speak any other language, what would it be and why?

#15

Describe a good way for family and friends to spend time together.

#16

You go to the grocery store and you can only buy THREE things. What do you buy and why?

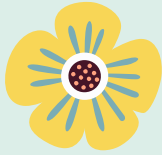
#17

How do you cheer someone up who is feeling down?

#18

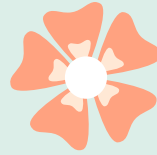
What is your favorite way to get exercise?

Additional Mental Health Resources



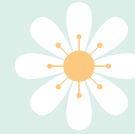
Disaster Distress Helpline

For free 24/7 counseling support through Red Cross: 1-800-985-5990



Crisis Text Line

Crisis Text Line: Text SIGNS to 741741 for 24/7, anonymous, free crisis counseling



Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Dial or text 988 24/7 for support

Stay Safe and Warm!

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to help, however we can!



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