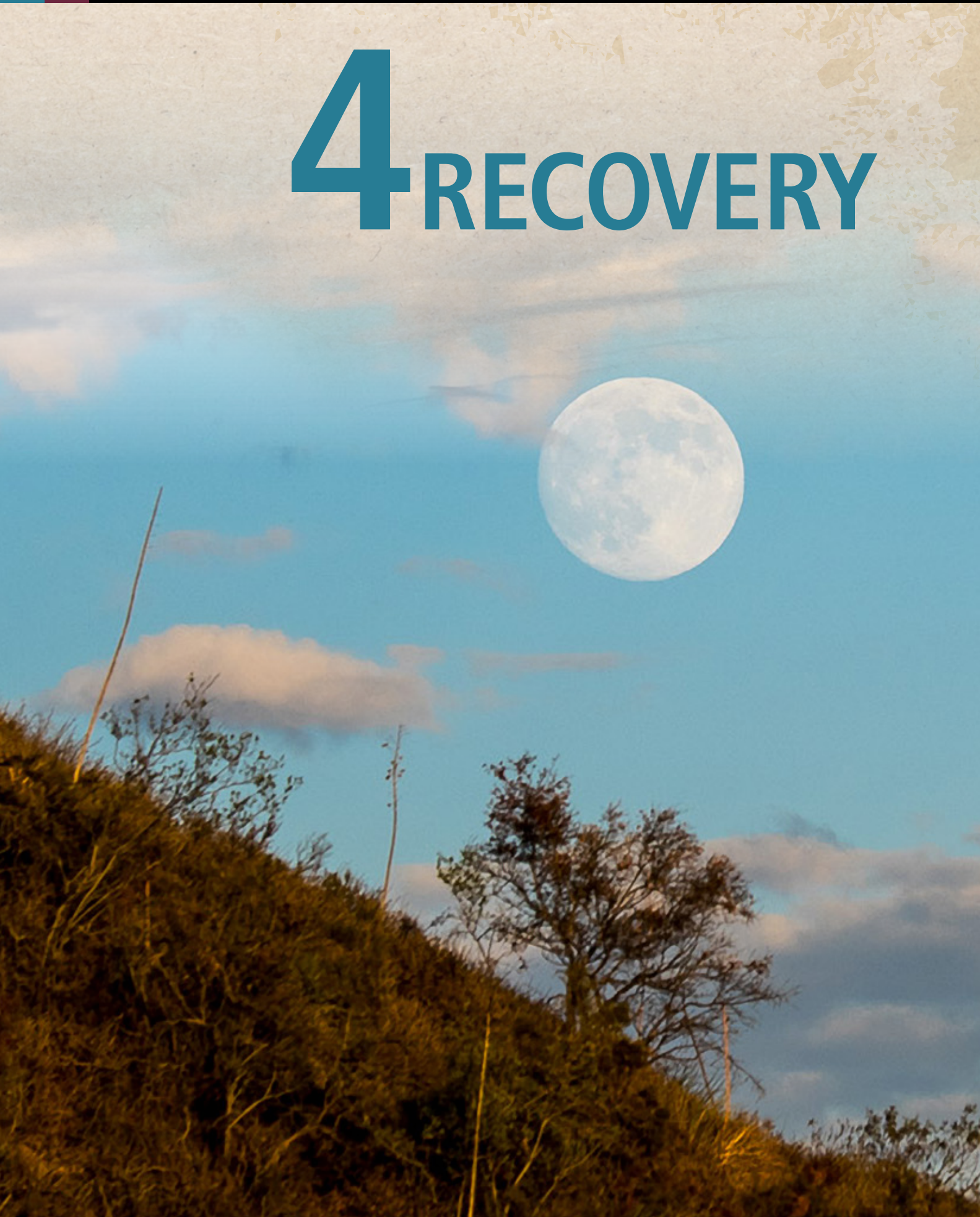


4 RECOVERY



4 - RECOVERY

DISASTER PSYCHOLOGY	60
STEPS AND RESOURCES	62
DISASTER ASSISTANCE	63



DISASTER PSYCHOLOGY

When disaster strikes, you and your family may be affected in several ways, ranging from injuries (physical and/or emotional) to property damage or loss. How quickly you can get back on your feet will depend on many factors, including the overall scope of the disaster, the severity of its direct impact on your life, and your level of pre-disaster planning and preparation.

HOW TO REDUCE DISASTER STRESS

Following a disaster you'll be very busy taking care of your immediate needs. As the shock wears off, you may find yourself thinking and behaving in ways that are troubling to you. Generally, these feelings don't last long. But it's common to feel let down and resentful for a longer period of time. Be aware that some feelings or responses may not appear until weeks, or even months, after the disaster.

Here are a few tips to help reduce stress during and after a disaster:

- **Slow down.** Take a deep breath, look around, and think carefully. You will make better decisions and be more efficient if you take your time before acting.
- **Stay in control.** Recognize what you can control and what you can't. You can control your own reactions, so don't get angry, or become aggressive, and don't blame others. Your attitude should be, "We're all in this together and we'll get through it if we collaborate."
- **Take care of yourself.** If you are freaking out, you won't be of much help to your family or neighbors. Stay hydrated and eat regularly. This will help you think more clearly. Get plenty of sleep. Help others once you are under control. Do not take stimulants, such as coffee, without eating food first. Limit or avoid alcohol use, as it can dehydrate your body and impair your judgment.
- **Get updates.** Your Family Emergency Plan should include multiple ways of getting information updates. Call the Topanga Coalition for Emergency Preparedness Hotline at (310) 455-3000, and check Twitter (@TCEP90290) for updates on what is happening in Topanga Canyon.
Monitor your ham radio and listen to channel 7 on your FRS radio for TCEP top-of-the-hour reports (available only during major canyon-wide disasters when the TCEP Emergency Operation Center has been activated). You'll be much calmer if you stay on top of what's going on around you. Share your feelings and emotions with others, rather than keeping them bottled up inside. It helps the healing.
- **Listen carefully to others.** Everyone experiences and processes disasters differently. Listen to what others are saying so you can understand what's important to them at a particular moment.
- **Give yourself some time off.** Take time for some relaxation. Find a place where you can get away from the chaos for a little while. You don't have to solve all the problems right away.
- **Rebuild relationships.** Keep your loved ones together and put aside petty differences. Talk and try to have some fun with those you love and cherish.



COMMON RESPONSES TO DISASTERS

- Irritability and anger
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to sleep
- Nightmares
- Sadness
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Hyperactivity
- Lack of concentration
- Hyperalertness
- Increase in alcohol or drug consumption

SMALL CHILDREN HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

Small children require special attention. They may become clingy, refuse to sleep alone, and become unusually upset by small things. They may hit siblings, defy adults, or act out in other ways. Take extra time to understand what your child is thinking and provide extra love, support, and reassurance. Reestablish routines such as meals, bedtime, and playing with familiar toys as soon as possible.

HELPING ADOLESCENTS COPE

Older children are more capable of understanding what happened, but don't expect them to be miniature adults. Adolescents are often very helpful during a disaster, but can display more difficult behavior after the immediate crisis has passed. Common behavior includes neglecting things that they usually do and becoming forgetful.

They may also have physical complaints and may be sad, restless, defiant, or withdrawn. They may stay away from home or become involved with drugs and alcohol. To help them, make time to talk. Determine what they want to do to make their world organized again, and help them to do these things—even if you have to delay other things that need to be done.

RESOURCE: If stress, anxiety, depression, or physical problems continue, you may wish to contact a counselor, a mental health center, or the post-disaster services provided by the American Red Cross.

STEPS AND RESOURCES

Once the immediate threat has passed, the recovery process begins—for you, and for the community at large. Road closures, temporary ordinances, and business relocations are only a few of the community recovery strategies that may be used during this phase.

Programs aimed at assisting businesses and residents may be of benefit, but only if you know about them. Attend community meetings, talk to neighbors, monitor official websites, Facebook, and Twitter feeds, and visit information centers set up by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Red Cross, and local authorities, to be sure you know what is happening in your area.

NEED	FIRST STEPS	NEXT STEPS	WHO CAN HELP
Get the Latest Information	Listen to local radio/television and monitor trusted social media accounts Visit local information centers such as shelters for health alerts and emergency information.	Getting the correct information about your area can be a real challenge. Know how to get information from public safety officials and reliable news sources. Community centers, churches, and schools are often used as information hubs for local residents. Remember...your car has a radio!	TCEP Hotline: (310) 455-3000 @TCEP90290 LAUSD: (213) 241-1000 Caltrans: (800) 427-7623 CHP: (818) 880-0980; cad.chp.ca.gov
Find Shelter	Even if your home is livable, you may not be able to get fresh food or water. Keep at least a 10-day supply of food and water. Know the likely areas where there may be a shelter.	American Red Cross shelter locations will be provided to local media. Non-Red Cross shelters may sometimes be available.	American Red Cross: (800) 733-2767 www.redcross.org TCEP: www.tcep.org/emergencystatus
Register for Help	Assistance from the federal government may be available for home repair loans, business loans, housing, and other specific emergency needs. Keep a set of financial and insurance records in your emergency kit so you have the information you will need to complete applications.	If federal assistance is made available, you will need to register with FEMA or the Small Business Administration (SBA). Local Assistance Centers may be established to provide face-to-face assistance. Remember, FEMA/SBA assistance does not make you whole again, but it can give you a helping hand to start the recovery process.	Toll-free telephone numbers and instructions on how and where to register will be broadcast through various media channels if federal assistance is made available.
Get MORE Help	Contact local assistance providers for direct assistance, such as food and clothing, mental health counseling, medical assistance devices, materials in languages other than English, longer-term housing, and more.	LA County provides information and referral services for a variety of available health and community resources. Local Assistance Centers may also have services for disaster victims. Many employers have employee assistance services available. The Red Cross Safe & Well program can help you let family and friends know you are alright.	211 LA County: Information and referral services 24 hours a day. Dial 2-1-1 Contact your health insurance provider. www.safeandwell.org
Document everything—before the disaster and after	Keep duplicate sets of important documents in your emergency kit and at a remote location. Take pictures before, during, and after all repairs. Keep all receipts!	Whether you receive FEMA grants, SBA loans, or other assistance, you will be required to have documentation for all claims. You will need proof of employment, copies of insurance payments, and receipts for equipment and supplies.	There are many software programs that can help you create a complete home inventory for insurance purposes. Reviews of the top 10 home inventory software programs can be found here: www.home-inventory-software-review.toptenreviews.com .
Utility Safety and Service Restoration	Propane: If you have a propane tank and you smell propane leaking, shut it off at the tank. Keep your propane company's phone number in your emergency kit. Natural gas: If you smell gas, turn it off at the meter. Keep a gas shut-off wrench in your emergency kit.	Propane: Once your propane tank has been inspected and deemed safe, you can turn the tank valve back on. Natural gas: Once your natural gas line has been turned off at the meter, only Southern California Gas or a licensed plumber can restore service.	Southern California Gas Co.: (800) 427-2200 LA County Public Works (Water): (800) 675-4357 Verizon: (800) VERIZON
Rebuilding	Pay attention to the credentials provided by contractors who want your business. Get multiple written bids for repair work, get and keep all receipts as documentation.	Unlicensed contractors can create more harm than good if they do not get building permits or perform shoddy work. You may jeopardize grants and loans if your contractors are not qualified.	Check the Contractors State License Board website before hiring a contractor: www.cslb.ca.gov
Understanding Assistance Limits	Ask lots of questions and read the small print on offered loans and grants. Know what you can expect from your insurance policies and understand that you will have to declare your insurance proceeds to FEMA and the SBA if you accept funds.	To receive grant assistance from FEMA, you must fill out an SBA loan application. Grants and loans from these agencies are limited and intended to help you get back on your feet. They are not designed to compensate you for your entire loss.	www.disasterassistance.gov



DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The federal government's Disaster Assistance Improvement Program provides disaster survivors with information, support, services, and a one-stop way to apply for disaster assistance.

If you can't access the website, disaster assistance phone numbers will be posted at County libraries and broadcast by the news media. Federal disaster assistance is not intended to restore your damaged property to its pre-disaster condition, but it may help you get back on your feet. FEMA disaster assistance is only available if the President signs a declaration of disaster.

At www.disasterassistance.gov, you can:

- Apply for the disaster assistance that best fits your needs.
- Locate a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center near you.
- Learn about Small Business Administration (SBA) loans for homeowners, renters, and businesses.
- Check the status of assistance applications.
- Find a hotel or place to live.
- Get information on food and nutrition programs.

Getting in Touch with Family Members

The American Red Cross Safe and Well website (www.safeandwell.org) is a central location for people in disaster areas to report their current status, and for their loved ones to access that information. Letting your family and friends know you are safe and well can bring them greater peace of mind and reduce overall stress levels. Just follow the instructions on the website to register. Review the process ahead of time with friends and family so that everyone knows how to use the site in case disaster strikes.

If Your Home Is Destroyed

- For immediate housing needs, the American Red Cross and other volunteer agencies set up shelters for people who cannot return to their homes.
- For health and space reasons, pets are not permitted in public emergency shelters. Contact the emergency management office, your local animal shelter or humane society to see if there is a place that can take your pets in an emergency.
- For those who have longer-term housing needs, FEMA may offer several types of assistance, including services and grants to help people repair their homes and find replacement housing.
- For long-term assistance after a Presidentially Declared Disaster, call the FEMA registration number and apply for FEMA and Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance programs.

Getting Food and Water Following a Disaster

If you follow the preparedness advice in this guide, you'll have a large supply of food and water at home. But if you've been displaced from your home, and local stores have bare shelves, you may need food and water. After a disaster, the American Red Cross and other volunteer agencies will provide food, water, and clothing to the best of their ability. Distribution locations will be broadcast on TV, radio, and social media channels.

If You Lose Your Job or Can't Work Because of a Disaster

People who lose their jobs because of a disaster may apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). DUA provides weekly benefits to individuals who are unemployed and not eligible for regular unemployment insurance compensation. Apply by registering with FEMA or contacting your local unemployment office.

Getting Legal Help

Local nonprofit organizations often provide legal assistance to individuals who have been impacted by disasters. Also, local members of the American Bar Association offer free legal counseling to low-income individuals. You can get more information at a Local Assistance Center or Disaster Recovery Center that is set up after the president declares a major disaster.

RESOURCES: FEMA provides several sources of assistance. Visit www.fema.gov/webform/disaster-assistance and www.disasterassistance.gov for more information. The IRS also has resources to help prepare and recover financially from disasters. Visit www.irs.gov and search for disaster assistance. Finally, the US Small Business Administration can help business owners to prepare and know the services available to them. Visit www.sba.gov/content/disaster-assistance.