

Mental Health Resources for Flood Recovery

The Vermont Department of Mental Health

Going through another round of flooding, especially on the anniversary of last year's disaster, can be deeply retraumatizing. While physical recovery is important, mental recovery is crucial too. You don't need to be directly affected by the floods to experience their mental health impacts. The following resources are available to assist you during this challenging time.

Who to Call:

****Starting Over Strong Vermont** Helps with disaster recovery through community outreach and mental health services. Dial **2-1-1** to connect with outreach workers and resources.

****988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** Call or text **988** for immediate support from trained crisis counselors who can offer emotional support and local resources.

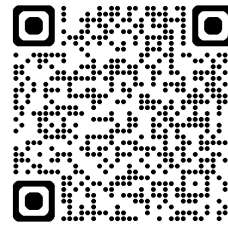
****Vermont Mobile Crisis** Vermont mobile crisis teams provide in-person support and crisis intervention. Dial **988** to reach your local community mental health centers.

****Pathways Vermont Support Line** Call or text **833-888-2557** for confidential, non-judgmental peer support for Vermonters 18 and older. Available 24/7.

The SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: Call or text **1-800-985-5990** for free, confidential crisis counseling available 24/7, on all days of the year

****Denotes Vermont-Based Resources****

For more information on flooding resources, tips for coping, visit mentalhealth.vermont.gov/flood or scan the QR code:



Contact your local county Designated Agency

Designated Agencies provide mental health care in your local communities, they are ready and available to provide you with support.

Clara Martin Center (Orange): 802-728-4466

Counseling Service of Addison County (Addison): 802-388-6751

Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (Windham & Windsor): 802-886-4500

Howard Center (Chittenden): 802-488-7777

Lamoille County Mental Health Services (Lamoille): 802-635-7174

Northeast Kingdom Human Services (Caledonia, Essex, Orleans): 802-748-3181

Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (Franklin, Grand Isle): 802-524-6554

Rutland Mental Health Services (Rutland): 802-775-2381

United Counseling Service of Bennington County (Bennington): 802-442-5491

Washington County Mental Health Services (Washington): 802-479-4083



Tips for Coping During Flood Recovery

The Vermont Department of Mental Health

Emotional distress can happen before and after a disaster, and people can experience a wide range of emotions during these times. There's no right or wrong way to feel—it's natural to feel anxious, scared, sad, or helpless when recovering from a disaster. The sights and sounds of the flooding, and even just waiting for it to happen, can bring back a lot of old emotions and memories. However, it's important to find healthy ways to cope when these events happen. Coping strategies include preparation, self-care, and identifying support systems.

Take care of yourself. Try to eat healthy, avoid using alcohol and drugs, and get some exercise when you can—even a walk around the block and deep breathing can make a difference to relieve stress.

Reach out to friends and family. Talk to someone you trust about how you are doing. If you have children, talk to them. They may feel scared, angry, sad, worried, and confused. Let them know it's okay to talk about what's on their mind. Role model healthy coping.

Limit your consumption of news. We live in a society where the news is available to us 24 hours a day via television, radio, and the Internet. The constant replay of news stories about a disaster or traumatic event can increase stress and anxiety and make some people relive the event over and over. Reduce the amount of news you watch and/or listen to.

Get enough “good” sleep. Some people have difficulty falling asleep after a disaster or wake up throughout the night. If you have trouble sleeping, only go to bed when you are ready to sleep, avoid using cell phones or laptops in bed, and avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol at least one hour before going to bed. If you wake up and can't fall back to sleep, try writing what's on your mind in a journal or on a sheet of paper.

Establish and maintain a routine. Try to eat meals at regular times and put yourself on a sleep schedule to ensure an adequate amount of rest. Include a positive or fun activity in your schedule that you can look forward to each day or week.

Avoid making major life decisions. Doing things like switching jobs or careers can already be stressful and are even harder to adjust to directly after a disaster.

Understand there will be changes. Disasters can destroy homes, schools, and places of business and worship and can disrupt the lives of people living in affected areas for a long time. Sometimes, people lose loved ones or experience injuries, both physical and mental, that may last a lifetime. Some people may also experience a temporary or permanent loss of employment. For children, attending a new or temporary school may result in being separated from peers, or after-school activities may be disrupted.

Take care of pets or get outside into nature when it's safe. Nature and animals can help us to feel better when we are down. See if you can volunteer at a local animal shelter—they may need help after a disaster. Once it's safe to return to public parks or natural areas, find a quiet spot to sit in or go for a hike.

Know when to ask for help. Signs of stress can be normal, short-term reactions to any of life's unexpected events—not only after surviving a disaster, but also after a death in the family, the loss of a job, or a breakup. It's important to pay attention to what's going on with you or with someone you care about, because what may seem like “everyday stress” can actually be: depression (including the thoughts of suicide), anxiety, or alcohol/drug abuse.