



# Chapter 3

## **Special Considerations**





# Disaster Psychology

When disaster strikes, physical assistance may be only part of what survivors need. “Psychological First Aid” for disaster induced stress and trauma may also be required. Severe cases will require the assistance of a mental health professional. For many, however, the best medicine you can provide may be a sympathetic ear.

**TIP: Disaster-induced stress is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.**

Disaster survivors normally experience a range of psychological and physiological reactions. Survivors’ reactions may become more intense as the amount of disruption to their lives increases. The severity and type of reaction varies with each person and depends upon several factors:

- Prior experience with the same or a similar event
- The intensity of the disruption
- The emotional aptitude of the individual
- Individuals feeling that there is no escape, which sets the stage for panic
- The length of time that has elapsed since the event occurred



## Preempt some of the symptoms by taking care of yourself:

- Try to rest a bit more
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals and drink plenty of water (even when you don’t feel like it)
- Try to keep a reasonable level of activity; physical activity is often helpful
- Re-establish a normal schedule as soon as possible; fight against boredom
- If you are alone, have someone stay with you for at least a few hours a day
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal; don’t try to fight them as they will decrease over time

## Psychological symptoms may include:

- Irritability or anger
- Self-blame or blaming others
- Isolation or withdrawal
- Fear of recurrence
- Feeling helpless
- Sadness, depression or grief
- Mood swings

**TIP:** The intensity, timing and duration of post-event psychological and physiological symptoms will vary from person to person. They may be acute or mild and may be immediate or delayed.

## Physiological symptoms may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Headaches, chest pain
- Diarrhea, stomach pain, nausea
- Increase in alcohol or drug use
- Feeling stunned, numb or overwhelmed
- Hyperactivity
- Nightmares
- Inability to sleep
- Fatigue, low energy

**TIP:** Psychological reactions to disaster include behavioral changes and regression in children including fear and anxiety about recurrences, sleep disturbances and school avoidance leading to development of school phobias. Re-establishing routine is essential for both children and adults.

**TIP:** During most disasters, mental health workers are available to help survivors, response workers and others affected by the disaster. If you, a family member or friend is in need of assistance, help may be available from the American Red Cross, Josephine County Public Health, Options for Southern Oregon or the Jackson County Mental Health Department.

# Special Kids Considerations

Kids are a huge help when it comes to preparing for emergencies. It is important to include them in all of your planning, organizing and drills. They will experience disasters just like adults will, so it's equally important that they be involved and know how to respond.

**Check out Ready.gov for these activities and more!**

Learn how to become a Disaster Master – make the right decision and unlock new levels!

Prepare with Pedro!  
Use this activity book to learn how to stay safe during disasters and emergencies.

Build-a-Kit Game  
You're on a mission to build an emergency kit. Do you know what you need?

Ready 2 Help card game teaches five simple steps to stay safe and make a difference until help arrives.

*Ready Wrigley* is a series of books created by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention that provide tips, activities and stories to help whole families prepare for emergencies.

**All Ready Wrigley Publications can be found at [CDC.gov/readywrigley](https://www.cdc.gov/readywrigley)**



Teenagers and other young people help their families, schools and communities prepare for hazardous events. They can be leaders before, during and after disasters. Whether you're just starting to learn about preparedness, want to join or start a youth preparedness program, or are looking for materials to teach the next generation of preparedness leaders, you'll find lots of options on [cdc.gov/readywrigley](https://www.cdc.gov/readywrigley) and [ready.gov/kids](https://www.ready.gov/kids) to help you learn how to prepare for a disaster.

**TIP:** Be sure to pack special items for your kids/teens when building your kits.

**For younger children:**

- Comfort items – blanket, stuffed animal
- Favorite toy or book

**For older kids:**

- Crafts, safe tools, books, music

Your family pet may be very comforting during uncertain times, but remember, if your pet is scared, it may behave unexpectedly.

**TIP:** Your teen is capable of saving your life.

Whenever possible, have your teen join in training classes. Include them in CPR, first aid, Stop the Bleed and others.

Encourage them to get involved in anything that will help your family prepare for emergencies. Look for areas of interest such as gardening, canning and outdoor survival skills or get them involved with Search and Rescue Explorers.





# Pets & Livestock Considerations

When disaster threatens, bring your pets inside immediately. Animals have instincts about severe weather and impending disaster and will often isolate themselves if they are afraid. Bringing them inside early can keep them from running away.

Make a plan for what to do with your pets if you have to evacuate your home. Josephine and Jackson County may offer companion animal sheltering for persons who are staying in a Red Cross shelter. All shelters are volunteer based and may not be able to open depending on the type of disaster. Have an alternate plan for your pets and livestock. If you have livestock, arrange for someone across the county to board them, and you theirs, if the event only affects one area.

**If you must leave your large animals, never open gates and let them loose. Animals enter the roadway and block emergency vehicles and evacuation routes.**

Locate and prearrange an evacuation site for your family and animals that is outside your immediate area. Ideally, this will be a friend/relative or a pet-friendly hotel willing to let your family and animals stay in the event of a disaster. Other possible animal housing options include veterinary hospitals, boarding kennels and animal shelters.

Dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, and pocket pets (mice, hamsters, etc.) all need to have plans for transporting and housing in a secure travel cage or carrier, with appropriate food, water, current veterinary records and photos for identification or reunification if they are being taken to a shelter.

If you are not home, pre-designate a willing neighbor or nearby friend to tend to your animals in the event of a disaster. They should have a key to your home, be familiar with your animals, know your evacuation procedures and where your evacuation supplies are kept. Keep leashes near the door making it easier for rescuers.

## AFTER A DISASTER

In the first few days after a disaster, leash pets when they go outside. Always maintain close contact; familiar scents and landmarks may be altered and your pet may become confused or lost.

The behavior of your pets may change after an emergency. Normally friendly pets may become aggressive or defensive. Watch animals closely. Leash or keep them in a secure, fenced area with shelter and water.

[www.ready.gov/pets](http://www.ready.gov/pets)

**TIP:** If you are evacuating, crate or collar and leash your pet before opening your door. When animals are scared, they will often behave unpredictably and may run if not crated or harnessed.

## LIVESTOCK

It is especially important for livestock owners to be prepared and practice their plans.

- Be *prepared* to evacuate at a Level 1 notice, evacuate livestock at a Level 2 (see Chapter 5 *Resources* for evacuation levels - Pg.49)
- Create a list of emergency telephone numbers to include veterinarian, state veterinarian, trailering resources and local volunteers
- Identify evacuation locations with water and power resources
- Make sure every animal has durable, visible identification
- Take food and other supplies for their care
- Take vaccination and feeding schedule in addition to ownership information

[www.avma.org/disaster](http://www.avma.org/disaster)

**TIP:** Never leave a pet outside or tied up during a storm!

# Varied Abilities

## Special Considerations



Anyone can experience an access or functional need at any time. A broken leg requiring crutches can create a temporary disability that changes your response to an emergency, for example. The needs may be physical, mental, emotional, socioeconomic, cultural or language based. Persons with access and functional needs and anyone assisting, living with or working with them should create a disaster plan. Addressing these potential challenges ahead of time will reduce the physical and emotional stresses during an emergency.



### Persons with Mobility Challenges

- Store emergency supplies in a pack or backpack attached to a walker, wheelchair or scooter.
- Keep a pair of heavy gloves in your supply kit to use while wheeling over glass or debris.
- If your chair does not have puncture-proof tires, keep a patch kit or can of sealant and air to repair tires.
- If you cannot use stairs, discuss lifting and carrying techniques that work for you. Write out brief instructions and keep them in your pack.
- If you use an electric wheelchair, keep a manual chair on hand for emergencies.



### Persons with Hearing Challenges

- Store hearing aids in a strategic and consistent place, to locate quickly.
- Have paper and pens in your kit to use if you lose your hearing aids.
- Install smoke alarms with both a visual and audible alarm. At least one should be battery-operated.
- If needed, ensure your TV has a decoder chip for access to signed or captioned emergency reports, or has closed captioning on for alerts. All TV's manufactured since 1993 have built in decoders.



### Persons with Medical Needs

- Where possible, aim for a 14-day supply of all of your medications and medical supplies (bandages, ostomy bags, syringes, tubing, solutions, etc.).
- If you use insulin or other refrigerated medication, ask your providers for tips on keeping items cool during longer power outages and options for medications that are more shelf stable for use during emergencies.
- If you use oxygen, remember you may not be able to acquire more for several days. Be sure to have several days worth on hand.
- Store your medications in one location, in their original containers with labels.
- Note important allergies and keep lists of all of your medications, including the name of medication, dose, frequency and prescribing doctor on your emergency information list.
- For all medical equipment that requires power, get information regarding back-up power, such as a battery or generator. If using a generator, seek professional help to make sure it is properly installed, vented and can be safely operated by you or an assistant.
- Know if your IV infusion pump has a battery back-up and how long it would last in an emergency
- Ask your home care provider about manual infusion techniques.
- Have written instructions for all equipment attached to the device(s).

# Varied Abilities

## Special Considerations



### All Persons With Access and Functional Needs

- Make an emergency information list and keep it with you. This list should have medical and health insurance and emergency contact information with names and numbers of contacts in the area and out of area. If you have a communication disability, make sure you list notes the best way to communicate with you.
- If you currently use a personal care attendant from an agency, check with the agency to see if they have special provisions for emergencies.
- If you hire your own personal care attendant, discuss your emergency plan with them and encourage them to have their own emergency plan.
- Find the location of utility shutoff valves and switches where you live; learn how and when to turn them off.
- Practice evacuation drills. Evacuate to a designated location to learn what assistance you might require and what you can do independently.
- Learn what to do in case of power outages. Know how to connect or start a back-up power supply for essential medical devices. Write down clear directions and attach it to the power supply.
- If you don't drive, talk with others about how you might leave if authorities require an evacuation and what local transportation is available that can meet your transport needs.
- Ask your provider about getting extra oxygen tanks and spare batteries to keep on hand; they may be covered by your insurance plan or provided by your supplier.
- Arrange for a relative or neighbor to check on you after an emergency event.
- Keep supplies in a consistent place that is easy for you to find and remember. Aim for at least two weeks of stored food and water. Learn to purify water for drinking and how to meet additional hygiene needs. (See the Preparedness Calendar on pages 44-47 for help.)
- Service animals may become confused or frightened. Keep them confined or securely leashed.
- Sign up for the Disaster Registry by visiting [www.rvcog.org](http://www.rvcog.org). (See page 48 for more information.)



### Persons with Visual Challenges

- If you are visually impaired, place security lights in each room to light paths of travel. These lights plug in but have a battery backup in case of power failure. Small solar lights may be another option.
- If helpful, mark emergency supplies with large print, fluorescent tape or braille. Add a magnifying lens if that will be a helpful aid outside the home.
- Store high-powered flashlights with wide beams and extra batteries.
- Hang on to older prescription glasses or spare contacts for backup use.