

“While natural disasters capture headlines and national attention short-term, the work of recovery and rebuilding is long-term.”  
Sylvia Mathews Burwell

## Resources & Recommended Steps for School- wide Response

[Konocti Unified: Returning to School after the Fire |](#)

*Thank you to all the fire personnel for unyielding commitment and to the community members and educators in KUSD who do the “heavy lifting” every day.*

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# Essential First Steps for All Professionals Who Help Children

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**STEP 1: Make sure that you (the helper) are emotionally ready** and able to assist a child or teen with addressing issues related to the fire.

**STEP 2: Know your limits** and where/who to call for referrals and assistance. Be informed about local agencies and services that assist youth and families in need (.e.g., hotlines, peer counseling, school groups, emergency rooms, religious organizations).

**STEP 3: Provide the student/child with a safe and comfortable environment to express his or her feelings. (Classroom setting and additional space within the classroom for expression)**

- Be flexible: Let students have some control of the situation: ex., include natural and unscheduled breaks, consider monitored breaks and possibly monitored class out of room expeditions as needed.
- Do not force the child or press the student/child for answers.
- Play, drawing, or writing can be mediums of initiating communication.

**STEP 4: Identify basic practical needs** and ensure that these are met; Assess the student/child's physical status: Has he or she been fed, slept, and been kept safe? (**Report to Administration when there are concerns**).

**STEP 5: What's Normal? What to Expect?** Educate those affected about the common responses, and basic coping tools, to stressful and traumatic events. Schools should facilitate communication among families, students and community agencies.

**STEP 6: Moving forward**

- Summarize the information students are sharing to Administration
- Emotional reactions are normal
- Remind student/child of what makes him or her safe (family/parents, friends, school, agencies are here to help and take care)
- Encourage the child to keep talking, writing, drawing, etc.
- Make necessary on-going referrals.
- Participate in school-led community events

## What can we (teachers, staff and schools) do to address the reactions of their students during and after a crisis situation?

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Teachers and staff are on the "front lines" during and following a crisis situation. Therefore, teachers, para-professionals and support staff are in a good position to provide early and on-going intervention. This is also a difficult position because we need to remain composed and in control for students at a time when we may be experiencing a flood of emotions in response to the crisis. This is especially difficult for those who do not feel comfortable addressing the needs of students following a crisis. Below are some suggestions you may already be considering, or you may even gain some ideas.

Crisis intervention/response is on-going. Some students may not experience a reaction to the crisis until days or weeks later. It is important for teachers to remain observant, patient and sensitive to students' reactions in the coming weeks. Some students may even try to convince others that they were not affected, and then suddenly show a strong emotional reaction.

The following list suggests interventions that teachers may consider when addressing the reactions of students to a crisis situation:

- **Modeling:** Children/Students tend to look toward adults to assess how to react to a situation. Being sensitive, calm and caring is paramount. This includes modeling appropriate expression of feelings for students. (A task that may be difficult given that teachers themselves may be significantly affected by the crisis). Model:
  - Welcoming new and visiting support staff as they try to help
  - Being flexible, patient and kind toward one another when emotions are surging
  - Keep routines as normal as possible. Kids gain security from the predictability of routine, including attending a safe school environment
  - Be clear with your learning intentions and success criteria
- **Honesty:** Be honest with kids and share with them as much information as they are developmentally able to handle/ Reassure kids that the world is a good place to be, but that there are people who do bad things
  - Listen to kids' fears and concerns
  - Rebuild and reaffirm healthy attachments and relationships
- **Sharing in the classroom/school:** Giving students permission to verbalize what they are experiencing is very important (a task that may be difficult given that teachers themselves may have been significantly affected by the crisis).
  - This can be formal or informal, let them talk.
  - Create a safe atmosphere and the opportunity to discuss feelings and reactions to the crisis situation.
  - **Students need to know that their fears and reactions are shared by others.**
- **Multiple modes:** Students should be given the opportunity to express themselves through other modes of communication as well (e.g., writing, and perhaps drawing or a quiet reading or space in the classroom) especially for those students who are hesitant to verbalize their feelings.
- **Circle-up:** Many teachers, at all grade levels, have found it useful to "circle-up" to establish a "check-in" before entering a challenging academic assignment/project.
- **Normal reactions to an abnormal situation:** Educating students about likely responses and emotions to the crisis is essential. Students should not feel they are "abnormal" or that they are "going crazy." Explain to students that it is ok and normal to experience a "normal reaction to an abnormal situation".
- **Waves of emotion:** Students should be reminded that they may experience waves of strong emotions and coached on how to effectively deal with them (*e.g., by talking to others, asking for help, looking to others for support, knowing who to go to*).
- **Time frame:** Typically, not always, the strong emotional reactions to a crisis situation are usually overcome in one to six weeks following the crisis. The long-term effects, however, could take weeks to months to dissipate.
- **Students who need additional support:** Classroom teachers/staff should monitor for students who are experiencing significant difficulty in comparison to peers, and who may require more individualized crisis intervention. [Criteria for determining which students require additional intervention is outlined below].

*Note:* When students are discussing their feelings, teachers need to listen in a noncritical and nonjudgmental manner, with empathy and support. It is important to communicate to students that their feelings are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. Students who are hesitant to verbalize their feelings should be encouraged but should not be forced.

## **When should teachers refer students for more individualized assessment and intervention?**

With support from school personnel and their families, and the passage of time, most students will be able to recover from the effects of a crisis and return to pre-crisis functioning. They will be able to meet the demands of their environment, most particularly the school environment. However, there are those students, due to their own psychological makeup (including history and ability to obtain and respond to support), and the severity and proximity of the precipitating event, who will continue to experience difficulties which interfere with functioning. These students are in need of further, and probably more individualized intervention.

## **The following are guidelines for determining which students should be referred for additional intervention; such as students who:**

- Cannot engage adequately in classroom assignments and activities after a sufficient amount of time has passed since the crisis and after a majority of their peers are able to do so,
- Continue to exhibit high levels of emotional responsiveness (e.g., crying, outbursts) after a majority of their peers have discontinued to do so,
- Appear depressed, withdrawn and non-communicative,
- Continue to exhibit poorer academic performance and decreased concentration,
- Express suicidal or homicidal ideation, or students who are intentionally hurting themselves (e.g., cutting themselves),
- Exhibit an apparent increased usage of alcohol or drugs,
- Gain or lose a significant amount of weight in a short period of time,
- Exhibit significant behavioral changes, and
- Discontinue attending to their hygienic needs.

## ***“Am I feeling normal?” COMMUNICATE COMMON RESPONSES TO DISASTER*** ***Be explicit with students that their feelings are normal reactions to an abnormal situation***

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Disasters such as earthquakes, transportation accidents or wildfires are typically unexpected, sudden and overwhelming. For many people, there are no visible signs of physical injury, but there can be an emotional toll. It is common for people who have experienced disaster to have strong emotional reactions. Understanding responses to distressing events can help you cope effectively with your feelings, thoughts and behaviors, and help you along the path to recovery.

## **What are common reactions and responses to disaster?**

Following disaster, people frequently feel stunned, disoriented or unable to integrate distressing information. Once these initial reactions subside, people can experience a variety of thoughts and behaviors. Common responses can be:

- **Intense or unpredictable feelings.** You may be anxious, nervous, overwhelmed or grief-stricken. You may also feel more irritable or moody than usual.
- **Changes to thoughts and behavior patterns.** You might have repeated and vivid memories of the event. These memories may occur for no apparent reason and may lead to physical reactions such as rapid heartbeat or sweating. It may be difficult to concentrate or make decisions. Sleep and eating patterns also can be disrupted — some people may overeat and oversleep, while others experience a loss of sleep and loss of appetite.
- **Sensitivity to environmental factors.** Sirens, loud noises, burning smells or other environmental sensations may stimulate memories of the disaster creating heightened anxiety. These “triggers” may be accompanied by fears that the stressful event will be repeated.
- **Strained interpersonal relationships.** Increased conflict, such as more frequent disagreements with family members and coworkers, can occur. You might also become withdrawn, isolated or disengaged from your usual social activities.
- **Stress-related physical symptoms.** Headaches, nausea and chest pain may occur and could require medical attention. Preexisting medical conditions could be affected by disaster-related stress.

### ***“How do I cope?”***

Fortunately, research shows that most people are resilient and over time are able to bounce back from tragedy. It is common for people to experience stress in the immediate aftermath, but within a few months most people are able to resume functioning as they did prior to the disaster. It is important to remember that resilience and recovery are the norm, not prolonged distress.

There are a number of steps you can take to build emotional well-being and gain a sense of control following a disaster, including the following:

- **Give yourself time to adjust.** Anticipate that this will be a difficult time in your life. Allow yourself to mourn the losses you have experienced and try to be patient with changes in your emotional state.
- **Ask for support from people who care** about you and who will listen and empathize with your situation. Social support is a key component to disaster recovery. Family and friends can be an important resource. You can find support and common ground from those who've also survived the disaster. You may also want to reach out to others not involved who may be able to provide greater support and objectivity.
- **Communicate your experience.** Express what you are feeling in whatever ways feel comfortable to you — such as talking with family or close friends, keeping a diary or engaging in a creative activity (e.g., drawing, molding clay, etc.).
- **Find a local support group** led by appropriately trained and experienced professionals. Support groups are frequently available for survivors. Group discussion can help you realize that you are not alone in your reactions and emotions. Support group meetings can be especially helpful for people with limited personal support systems.
- **Engage in healthy behaviors** to enhance your ability to cope with excessive stress. Eat well-balanced meals and get plenty of rest. If you experience ongoing difficulties with sleep, you may be able to find some relief through relaxation techniques. Avoid alcohol and drugs because they can be a numbing diversion that could detract from as well as delay active coping and moving forward from the disaster.

- **Establish or reestablish routines.** This can include eating meals at regular times, sleeping and waking on a regular cycle, or following an exercise program. Build in some positive routines to have something to look forward to during these distressing times, like pursuing a hobby, walking through an attractive park or neighborhood, or reading a good book.
- **Avoid making major life decisions.** Switching careers or jobs and other important decisions tend to be highly stressful in their own right and even harder to take on when you're recovering from a disaster.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & READING:**

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/recovering-disasters.aspx>

<http://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf>

[http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/Crisis%20Guide%20-%20NYU.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/Crisis%20Guide%20-%20NYU.pdf)

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/school-counselors-members/professional-development/2016-webinar-series/learn-more/helping-kids-during-crisis>

<https://childrensnational.org/~media/cnhs-site/files/resources/ichoc/handbook.ashx?la=en>

[http://cbitsprogram.org/\\_static/cbits/uploads/files//PFA%20LPC%20US%20Dept%20of%20Ed%20%20RMS%20HH\\_Vol3Issue3.pdf](http://cbitsprogram.org/_static/cbits/uploads/files//PFA%20LPC%20US%20Dept%20of%20Ed%20%20RMS%20HH_Vol3Issue3.pdf)

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/recovering-disasters.aspx>

[\*A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE IN OUR SCHOOLS\*](#)

<http://www.nctsn.org>

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Bonanno, G. A., Papa, A., & O'Neill, K. (2001). Loss and human resilience. *Applied and Preventive Psychology, 10* (3), 193-206. doi: 10.1016/S0962-1849(01)80014-7

Butler, L. D., Koopman, C., Azarow, J., Blasey, C. M., Magdalene, J. C., DiMiceli, S., ... & Spiegel, D. (2009). Psychosocial predictors of resilience after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 197* (4), 266-273. doi: 10.1097/NMD.0b013e31819d9334

Silver, R. C., Holman, E. A., McIntosh, D. N., Poulin, M., & Gil-Rivas, V. (2002). Nationwide longitudinal study of psychological responses to September 11. *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association, 288* (10), 1235-1244. doi: 10.1001/jama.288.10.1235

# Lake County Departments

Agency	Contact	Resource
<b>Lake County Behavioral Health</b>	<b>Crisis Line (800) 900-2075</b>  Southlake Office (707) 994-7090  Lucerne Office (707) 274-9101  Circle of Native Minds Wellness Center (Lakeport) (707) 263-4880  The Bridge Peer Support Center (Clearlake) (707) 995-2973  La Voz de la Esperanza Centro Latino (Clearlake) (707) 994-4261	Wellness and emotional services
<b>Lake County Social Services</b> <a href="#">Click here</a> for an online Benefit Application	(707) 995-4200 / (800) 628-5288	Medical and food assistance for qualified individuals, and temporary cash assistance for families with a needy child based on eligibility criteria.
<b>Lake County Animal Care and Control</b>	(707) 263-0278	
<b>Assessor-Recorder</b> Lake County	(707) 263-2302	<i>Real property tax relief and valuation.</i>
<b>Community Development</b>	(707) 263-2221	Building & Safety, Inspection, Code Enforcement, and Planning.
<b>Public Health</b>	(707) 263-1090	Health Resources and services
<b>Housing Programs</b>	(707) 262-1090	Fire Housing Information
<b>Public Services</b>	(707) 262-1618	Landfill locations
<b>Public Works</b>	(707) 263-2341	County maintained roads

Agency	Contact	Resource
<b>Special Districts</b>	(707) 263-0119	Sewer, Utilities...etc.
<b>Veteran's Services</b>	(707) 263-2384	<i>Serving Those Who Served</i>
<b>Native American Resource Center</b>		
<b><u>California Indian Legal Services</u></b>	(800) 829-0284 or (916) 978-0960	Free or low cost legal services to qualified California tribes, tribal organizations and Native American individuals.
<b><u>California Tribal TANF Partnership (CTTPC)</u></b>	(707) 262-4400 or (866) 720-TANF (8263)	Temporary cash assistance for families with at least one Native American child, based on eligibility criteria.
<b>Non-Profit Organizations</b>		
<b>American Red Cross</b>	(707) 263-8451	Referrals to disaster recovery case managers and disaster recovery resources.  Preparation resources including family disaster plans, radio stations in area and tips to build a disaster survival kit.
<b>Lake Family Resource Center (LFRC)</b>	(707) 279-0563/888-775-8336	Provide Resource Information
<b>Legal Services of Northern California</b>	(707) 462-1471	Legal support for families
<b>North Coast Opportunities (NCO)</b>	707-462-1954 or 800-606-5550 (toll free)	Coordinating cash donations via Mendo-Lake Credit for Clayton Fore Victims
<b>Workforce Lake</b>	Clearlake (707) 998-8591 Lakeport (707) 263-0630	Employment services as EDD's America's Job Center of California, also Veterans Services Office at Lakeport location.
<b>Lake County Chamber of Commerce</b>	(707) 263-5092/1-866-525-3767	Community and business resources



Agency	Contact	Resource
<a href="#">Salvation Army</a>	(707) 995-1128	Food and hygiene.
<a href="#">United Policyholders</a>	(800) 286-5631	Non-profit insurance claim help. Providing information and answering questions about insurance and recovery.

## Federal & State Agencies & Organizations

[U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) (800) 827-5722

[SBA Disaster Loan Program information](#)

[SBA Disaster Loan application](#)

[Senator Dianne Feinstein](#) (415) 393-0707

Help with issues with any federal agencies; for example, passports, Social Security checks lost or damaged, etc.

[Senator Mike McGuire](#) *Representing the 2nd Senate District - North Coast / North Bay* **Santa Rosa Office:** 50 D St., Suite #120A Santa Rosa, CA 95404 Phone: 707-576-2771 Fax: 707-576-2773

[Internal Revenue Service](#) (800) 829-1040 For information on Casualty, Disaster, and Theft Losses and other questions regarding Federal income and payroll taxes.

[Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#) (800) 772-1213

Information on applying for Social Security benefits, survivor benefits, expediting delivery of check due to disaster, and replacement of lost social security cards.

[U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (800) 827-1000

Information about VA death benefits, pension, insurance settlements, or other information related to VA.

[California Board of Equalization \(BOE\)](#) (800) 400-7115

Questions regarding sales and use, property and special taxes

[California Contractors State License Board](#) (800) 321-CSLB (2752)

Information on how to check the license of contractors and guidance on building after a natural disaster.

[How to Hire a Contractor](#) (Video)

[California Department of Housing and Community Development](#) (916) 255-2501 permits and (800) 952-8356 registration and titling

*Can assist with manufactured housing questions, including repairs, installation and/or registration and titling.*

**Department of Insurance** (800) 927-4357

Answer questions about existing insurance policies and coverage provided.

**Franchise Tax Board** (800) 852-5711

Information on filing disaster and casualty losses on a tax return.

**California Department of Public Health** (916) 650-6416 main line (916) 445-2684 vital records or [click here](#)

Information on health concerns related to a disasters. Works with those who have lost vital records as a result of disaster; birth, death, and marriage records should be requested from the county recorder's office in the county where the even occurred .

**California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)** (800) 777-0133

Forms to assist in replacing documents, such as driver licenses, identification cards, vehicle registration, and certificates of title lost to disaster.

**California Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** (800) 952-5626

Services for those with CALVET loans who have suffered damage caused by a disaster.

**California Employment Development Department (EDD)**

(800) 300-5616 (unemployment insurance benefit claims) and (888) 745-3886 (assistance for employers) Employment services for job seekers and employers. Unemployment benefits for qualified workers who lose their job due to no fault of their own, such as disaster. Employers affected by a state of emergency may request a 60-day extension to file state payroll taxes without penalties or interest.

**California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)** (916) 845-8510

Information on disaster preparedness and recovery.

**Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program** (707) 994-1151, 14085 Lakeshore

Drive #4, Clearlake, CA 95422 *Helps low income to moderate income pregnant women, new mothers, babies and young children with vouchers for healthy and nutritious food.*

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