

## Nebraska Strong: Recovery Project

*Call the hotline for free, confidential assistance.*

**1-800-464-0258 OR 1-800-985-5990**

### WHY DO I FEEL THE WAY I DO?

The loss or damage to your home, property and personal belongings has set into motion months of effort to recover and rebuild.

While physical property and possessions are concerns that consume your time and energy, emotional reactions to disaster are often pushed aside or ignored.

As you endure long-term stress, your health can be adversely affected. It is common for headaches, stomach or intestinal problems, colds, viruses, and an increase in allergies to occur more frequently.

Pre-existing medical conditions such as heart problems and high blood pressure may be made worse by the prolonged stress.

You have been through an exceptionally stressful situation and emotional reactions may continue for many months following the disaster. It is common for people to experience a wide range of emotional reactions to a disaster.

Flyer adapted from Wisconsin Project Recovery – Lutheran Social Services

## Nebraska Strong: Recovery Project



Stress and Distress are common when recovering from damage.  
**You are not alone.**

Free & Confidential  
Nebraska Rural Response Hotline

**1-800-464-0258**

National Disaster Distress Helpline

**1-800-985-5990**

# The Effects of Prolonged Stress

# The Healing Power of Grief

## *The Down Hill Slope: Prolonged Stress*

Natural disasters often lead to prolonged emotional and physical stress. During times of extreme stress, people experience varying stages of emotion. Alarm or shock is often the first stage, followed by resistance (denial) then exhaustion.

Exhaustion, fear, anger, disillusionment, cynicism and depression are common. These responses are normal and appropriate for something (a home, a farm, a business, a dream) which is lost over a long period of time.

### *Negative results of prolonged stress include:*

- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Nightmares
- Irritability; outbursts of anger
- Excessive drinking/drug use
- Difficulty concentrating
- Excessive worry, hyper vigilance or extreme concern
- Re-experiencing the event
- Guilt and self-doubt
- Withdrawal and suspicion
- Sudden painful emotions
- Apathy, avoidance of emotions, activities and situations associated with the event

## *The Up Hill Climb: Recovery*

Everybody has their own individual time table for grief. Some people may go through the rest of their lives angry with the unfairness of the flood. With support and guidance, however, most people are able to move beyond these feelings.

Fortunately, grief can be one of the most healing experiences we can go through. People can learn valuable lessons from adversity.

### *Lessons learned might include:*

- Reframing the meaning of life and setting priorities; finding larger purposes, value and meaning to life
- Realizing the importance of relationships - that helping others may be a way to “repay” the help received during the disaster
- The positive power of connection to our neighbors and communities
- The qualities of strong families; which include commitment, appreciation, communication time, coping and spiritual wellness The need to say thanks and the benefits of celebration

### **Here's what you can do right now to ensure you are ready for the uphill climb!**

- a) Get plenty of rest.
- b) Take time for yourself.
- c) Talk to someone if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Feelings of detachment, avoidance and apathy might be an effective way of conserving emotional energy and re-grouping.

If it becomes a problem or interferes with your day-to-day life, it may be time to seek help.

See your doctor or call the hotline for free, confidential assistance.

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