

Digging Deep

Taking Care of Yourself and Your Family—During and After a Disaster or Crisis

When you care for yourself, you can better comfort and protect children—and little ones learn lifetime lessons by watching their parents take care of themselves and build their own resilience.

In the Worst First Moments

- **“Dig deep”** for the best, strongest parts of yourself. This will help keep you steadier and remind you that you *can* keep it together for your little ones.
- **Remember** to drink water (if it’s clean and safe) so that you can think clearly and function as well as possible.
- **Be on the lookout** for first responders and aid workers, and get information about all the help that is available.
- **Focus** on one small goal that you may be able to accomplish, like eating a hot meal or taking a shower at some point in the future, rather than things beyond your control.
- **Know** that we are stronger together. If you are around people you don’t know (or you don’t know your neighbors) introduce yourself (maybe to other parents with kids close in age to yours) and find ways to help one another.
- **Be patient** with yourself as you begin to cope with what has happened. Healing takes time.
- **Helping** others and being of service, even in small ways—and even when you’re in need of help too—can make a difference in how you’re feeling.

As Recovery Begins

- **Notice** and focus on any improvements around you, no matter how small they are. If you don’t see any right away, look for them or ask others for their perspective.
- **Remind** yourself that this situation (and the way you feel right now) will not last forever.
- **Remember** that this experience can make you and your family stronger. Explain that to your children.
- **Comfort** yourself and your children in any way you can, such as singing special songs or wrapping yourselves up in a blanket together.
- **Take care.** As much as you can, eat well, get some sleep, take breaks, and let yourself begin to do some small things you enjoy (if possible, make a playlist of music that inspires you to keep going).
- **Talk** with other parents and caregivers about your experiences, worries, challenges (and successes!) in this situation. Find ways to support each other.
- **Begin** to seek out extra help from relief workers, friends, or extended family members who are good listeners. Take advantage of available resources such as doctors or counselors.

