



# It's Up to Us<sup>®</sup>

to Create a Healthy & Supportive San Diego

A special bulletin covering mental health topics for San Diegans



Edition 36

## About the Bulletin

Changes in life can come at us fast. Whether it's global news like a natural disaster or personal events like losing a loved one, unexpected information can make us feel anxious or scared and can significantly impact our mental well-being. Read on for helpful tips on how to protect our mental health when life throws difficult things our way.

This bulletin is part of the *It's Up to Us* campaign, developed through the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, and supports the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision to promote a community that is healthy, safe, and thriving. By raising awareness, encouraging dialogue, and providing access to local resources, we aim to inspire wellness, reduce stigma, and prevent suicide in all San Diegans, with a particular emphasis on San Diego's hardest hit and most at-risk populations.

**Up2SD.org<sup>®</sup>**  
LINK UP FOR INFORMATION AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Access & Crisis Line  
**888-724-7240**

COMMUNITY RESOURCES 2-1-1



## Shine a Light On: Grieving After a Loss

Losing a loved one can feel overwhelming, and while loss is a normal human experience, it can still leave you feeling confused, angry, and sad.

We all experience grief differently. Some emotions you may have include:<sup>1</sup>

- Denial
- Shock
- Confusion
- Sadness
- Anger
- Guilt
- Despair



## Growth After Loss

Grieving is never easy. Give yourself time to heal from the pain. Here are some actions that are proven to help over time:<sup>2</sup>

### FOR YOURSELF



**TALK** If it feels hard to talk to your peers, consider a support group. Many find it easier to talk with those who have been through similar experiences.



**TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH** Eating healthy well-balanced meals, exercising when you can, sticking to a sleep schedule, being mindful of alcohol consumption, or going for a walk can help create stability.



**FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE TIMES** Collecting donations to support a favorite charity of the departed, passing on a family name to a baby, or planting a garden in their honor can help keep their memory alive.

### FOR OTHERS



**SHARE THEIR SORROW** Encourage them to talk about their feelings of loss and share fond memories.



**BE PATIENT** Remember that it can take a long time to recover from a major loss. Make yourself available to talk.



**OFFER PRACTICAL HELP** Babysitting, cooking, and running errands can alleviate additional stress.

<sup>1</sup> Mental Health America (n.d.). Bereavement and grief. <https://www.mhanational.org/bereavement-and-grief>

<sup>2</sup> American Psychological Association. (2020, January 1). Grief: Coping with the loss of your loved one. <https://www.apa.org/topics/families/grief>

## Did You Know?

Emotional distress can happen before and after a disaster. Coping strategies include preparation, self-care, and identifying support systems.

# Read Up: Coping After Disaster or Tragedy

If you ever experience a natural disaster, or a personal loss or tragedy of any kind, it is important to learn how to cope with the effects of these events for your emotional health.

Caring for your emotional health during and after a tragedy with the following tips can help you start on the road to healing.<sup>3-5</sup>

### BUILD A ROUTINE

Try coming up with a new structured schedule that can help bring some control back into your life.

### TAKE BREAKS

Taking a moment for a few deep breaths can help you unwind and de-stress during times of sadness.

### CONNECT WITH OTHERS FOR SUPPORT

Turn to family, friends, community members or organizations, and faith-based support groups.

### BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF

Don't feel pressure to experience or recover from the event in the same way others do.

### OTHER THINGS THAT MAY HELP:



Limit your consumption of news



Take a break from screen time

Seek help when it is hard to manage your mental health on your own. Visit [Up2SD.org/resources](https://Up2SD.org/resources) for support that can help you.

## Check In With Yourself

### SURVIVOR'S GUILT

- Survivor's guilt is a common symptom of stress experienced by someone who has survived an incident in which others passed away.<sup>6</sup>
- Remember it's not your fault. If you're having these feelings, consider reaching out for support.

### POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an intense physical and emotional response to things that remind someone of previous negative life-changing events.<sup>3</sup>
- Although it may take time for treatment, things do get better. If you experience symptoms months after the event, talk with a healthcare provider, or call your local mental health clinic for support.

Symptoms may include but are not limited to:

Flashbacks

Nightmares

Increased alertness or sensitivity

## When to Get Support

If your grief seems like it is too much to bear or you are unable to carry out daily responsibilities, it can be helpful to seek professional assistance.

- San Diego County's Access and Crisis Line provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis.

o Access and Crisis Line: 888-724-7240

- The Disaster Distress Helpline provides 24/7 crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.

o Disaster Distress Helpline, call or text: 1-800-985-5990

o Visit [DisasterDistress.samhsa.gov](https://DisasterDistress.samhsa.gov)

Find more resources that can work for you at [Up2SD.org/resources](https://Up2SD.org/resources).

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Coping with a traumatic event. <https://www.cdc.gov/masstrauma/factsheets/public/coping.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Coping with a disaster or traumatic event. <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/index.asp>

<sup>5</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). Coping tips for traumatic events and disasters. <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips>

<sup>6</sup> Raypole, C. (2021, March 11). How to cope with survivor guilt, because survival is no reason to feel guilty. Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/survivors-guilt>