

Getting support after a critical event



A critical event can happen at any time. It can be the loss of a co-worker, a tragedy in the community, a natural disaster, or an act of violence. These events often involve grief, loss, unsettling feelings, and sometimes fear or even anger. The experiences and emotions can be difficult to make sense of and process. When these events are close to our own lives and communities, they can be more difficult to handle.

What are some signs of stress after a critical event?

The signs of stress after a critical event can be physical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral. People experience stress in different ways. When you're aware of your reactions and needs, you'll be better able to cope with stressful events. The list below isn't exhaustive.



Physical

- Fatigue
- Chills
- Unusual thirst
- Chest pain
- Headaches
- Dizziness



Cognitive

- Uncertainty
- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Poor attention
- Poor decision-making ability
- Poor concentration or memory
- Poor problem-solving ability



Emotional

- Grief
- Fear
- Guilt
- Intense anger
- Apprehension and depression
- Irritability
- Chronic anxiety



Behavioral

- Inability to rest
- Withdrawal
- Antisocial behavior
- Increased alcohol consumption
- Change in communication
- Loss of or increase in appetite

What you can do to help yourself

- Reach out to your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).¹
- Express your experience to appropriate and supportive people.
- Limit your intake of news and social media.
- Within the first 24 to 48 hours, get some form of physical exercise, such as a brisk walk, along with relaxation.
- Think about what has helped you in the past. What can you do to take care of yourself now?
- Eat regularly and be aware of your use of alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and drugs.
- Rest, relax, and get plenty of sleep.
- Calm anxiety and racing thoughts with mindfulness practices like deep breathing or meditation.
- Give yourself permission to do things you enjoy and focus on those things.
- Maintain your routine where you can and preserve some structure for yourself.

Kaiser Permanente's mental health and addiction phone numbers

When you call, we'll assess your needs and offer a phone, video, or in-person appointment with a mental health and addiction medicine specialist, if appropriate and available, for nonurgent mental health or addiction medicine concerns. You don't need a referral to access these services from a Kaiser Permanente clinician.

Visit kp.org/mentalhealthservices to find mental health clinic locations, phone numbers, and support services in Southern California.

Mental health and wellness resources

Kaiser Permanente has a full spectrum of mental health and addiction care resources for you, including wellness apps available to members at no additional cost.

[Choose Better](#)

Find up-to-date information and resources available through Kaiser Permanente.

[Self-care apps for emotional wellness²](#)

Get 24/7 help with anxiety, stress, sleep, relationships, and more – at no additional cost to Kaiser Permanente members.

Visit kp.org/selfcareapps to get started.

National 24/7 suicide and mental health crisis lifeline

If you need addiction or mental health-related crisis support, or you're worried about someone else, you can call or text **988** (TTY **711**). You can also chat with a trained crisis counselor at the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for confidential support at no charge. The lifeline is provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

1. EAP services are not intended to be replacements for mental health and substance use disorder services from a health plan.
2. The apps and services described above are not covered under your health plan benefits, are not a Medicare-covered benefit, and are not subject to the terms set forth in your *Evidence of Coverage* or other plan documents. The apps and services may be discontinued at any time.