**Post-Emergency Recovery**

Following an emergency, it is important for youth programs to consider potential ongoing impacts of the emergency on both their youth participants and their staff. Helping return a sense of normalcy and routine can be an important safeguard for youth following the disturbance and potential trauma of an emergency.

**Building Youth Resilience After an Emergency**¹

Programs can implement simple steps to build resilience among their participants and help youth cope with their emotional and physical needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors for Building Resilience</th>
<th>Ways to Help Youth Cope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Assist youth in returning to normal activities as soon as possible, to connect them with peers and caregivers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Participation                 | ● Purposely incorporate recovery activities into your programming.  
                              | ● Include youth in discussions and planning.  
                              | ● Structure activities to allow youth time to connect with each other. |
| Structure, roles and responsibilities | ● Maintain structure and responsibilities previously assigned to youth.  
                              | ● Education youth about their roles during a disaster.  
                              | ● Provide consistency in their routines. |
| Support and nurturance         | ● Reassure youth with firmness and compassion.  
                              | ● Be patient and understanding. Give youth extra time and attention.  
                              | ● Check in with families and caregivers and offer programmatic support to them, to the extent able.  
                              | ● Communicate your program’s strategies and actions for responding to and recovering from the emergency. |
| Critical reflection and skill building | ● Encourage youth to describe what they’re feeling and allow them to speak freely about what scares or puzzles them.  
                              | ● Provide creative play opportunities. |
| Resources                      | Watch for changes in youth’s behavior, and seek help from a mental health specialist or other trusted community resource if youth don’t respond to other suggestions and supports. |
| Communication                  | ● Calmly and firmly explain the situation and what will happen next.  
                              | ● Use positive behavior and language around youth.  
                              | ● Encourage youth to ask questions and listen when they talk.  
                              | ● Try to answer questions and address concerns with concrete, easy-to-follow information.  
                              | ● Give constructive information about how they can be prepared to protect themselves.  
                              | ● Limit exposure to the media (e.g., TV, radio, computers, and reporters who want to interview youth). |

Additional Resources

- [Youth.gov's Recovery and Reunification](#)
- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network's Psychological First Aid Field Operations Guide](#)
- [SAMHSA's Tips for Talking With and Helping Children and Youth Cope After a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)
- [FEMA and the American Red Cross: “Helping Children Cope with Disaster”](#)
- **Curricula**
  - [Save the Children's “Journey of Hope” and “Shelter from the Storm” programs](#)
  - Mercy Corps’ [“What Happened to MY World?”](#) (natural disaster focus)