

## Tips for Coping with Stress and Anxiety of a Hurricane

It is normal to feel heightened stress and anxiety while anticipating the arrival of a large-scale hurricane. Trust that if you prepare yourself as well as you can, you will make it through this storm - physically and emotionally.

- **Get the facts.** Gather information from a credible source that will help you accurately determine your risk and prepare accordingly. BUT, limit your exposure to news reports that focus on damage and destruction.
- **Make connections.** Good relationships with close family members, friends, neighbors, and peers at work are important. Coming together and helping one another can be positive for your emotional health.
- **Stay healthy.** A healthy lifestyle – including proper diet, exercise and rest – is your best defense against any threat. A healthy body can have a positive impact on your thoughts and emotions, enabling you to make better decisions and better deal with the hurricane’s uncertainties.
  - **Don’t forget to pack healthy snacks:** Dried fruits, nuts, beef jerky, protein bars, fruits that do not require refrigeration (oranges, apples, bananas), etc.
- **Maintain a hopeful outlook.** Remember many in the community, local government, and at Lakeland Regional Health have already mobilized to address the threat of the hurricane. Also, many improvements have been made to response systems since the last large-scale hurricanes.
- **Reach out to your children and dependents.** Help children by restricting constant viewing of the news, give them assurance of plans to keep them safe and maintaining their routines as much as possible.
- **Take a news break.** Watching endless replays of footage from the disasters can make your stress even greater. Although you’ll want to keep informed – especially if you have loved ones affected – take a break from watching the news.
- **Keep things in perspective.** Although a large scale weather event is disruptive, don’t forget to focus on the things that are good in your life and make time for activities that bring you joy. Laughter with good friends is an incredible stress reliever.
- **Control what you can.** There are routines in your life that you can continue and sometimes you need to do those and take a break from even thinking about the disasters.

***Recall times when you’ve successfully managed challenging life circumstances. Draw upon those skills and experiences to help you through the current storm.***

LRH Behavioral Health Team

Reference: American Psychological Association, October 8 2018