



Coping with Stress After Emergency Relocation

Wildfires, floods, storms, wars and other natural man-made disasters can force people from their homes. Sometimes the evacuation is temporary, with a possibility to return home. Sometimes the relocation is long-lasting or even permanent, as a result of the home being destroyed or severe violence. If you have been forced from your home by violence or disaster, here is some guidance on how to cope with the stress and trauma you may be feeling.

The Stress & Trauma for Forced Relocation

Emergency or forced relocation is not a move made by choice. It is often made under extreme pressure and sometimes in the face of danger. Factors that can contribute to the stress & trauma of emergency relocation include:

- Separation from family & friends
- Grief over the loss of belongings
- Financial loss & the pressure of unanticipated expenses
- Discomfort & lack of privacy in emergency housing

Forced relocation can be even more traumatic in the following circumstances:

- Family Members or friends die
- People are forced to flee to another county
- Violence is witnessed or experienced
- A temporary refuge comes to feel permanent

Any of these experiences can be distressing. In combination, they can leave you feeling shocked, confused, anxious, and deeply unhappy. Here are some strategies to help you cope, both in the early days of your relocation, as well as the long-term effect of adjusting to unplanned changes in your life.

Coping Strategies After an Emergency Relocation

Emergency relocation may never be easy or comfortable and grief over any losses take time to process. Below are some strategies to help you get through a difficult time.

- Stay Connected - Do what you can to live the emotions of the people around you, even as you acknowledge the pain & loss you may be feeling.
- Establish a daily routine - Find new activities to build into a regular routine.
- Lean on your spiritual beliefs & practices - Allow nature, yoga, meditation, prayer or a religious text comfort you.
- Engage with your new community - Make an effort to meet new people & explore your new community.
- Seek and accept help - Use counseling services if offered & ask for help in navigating the practical issues of living in your new home.

If you are concerned about your mental health, don't hesitate to seek advice. BHS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 800-245-1150 or by visiting www.behavioralhealthsystems.com.



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