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**University Counseling Center Trauma Health and Hazards Center**

1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway 1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway

Colorado Springs, CO 80918 Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Phone: (719) 255-3265 Phone: (719) 255-3265

**When Terrible Things Happen - What You May Experience**

**Immediate Reactions**

There are a wide variety of positive and negative reactions that survivors can experience during and immediately after disaster. These include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Domain** | **Distressing Responses** | **Positive Responses** |
| Cognitive | Confusion, disorientation, worry, intrusive thoughts and images, self-blame, difficulty making decisions | Determination and resolve, sharper perception, courage, optimism, faith, adaptation, planning for the future |
| Emotional | Shock, sorrow, grief, sadness, fear, anger, numb, irritability, guilt and shame | Feeling involved, challenged, mobilized |
| Social | Extreme withdrawal, interpersonal conflict | Social connectedness, altruistic helping behaviors |
| Physiological | Fatigue, headache, muscle tension, stomachache, increased heart rate, exaggerated startle response, difficulties sleeping, gastro-intestinal irritability | Alertness, readiness to respond, in-creased energy |

**Common negative reactions that may continue include:**

* **Intrusive reactions** 
  + Distressing thoughts or images of the event while awake or dreaming
  + Upsetting emotional or physical reactions to reminders of the experience
  + Feeling like the experience is happening all over again (“flashback”)
* **Avoidance and withdrawal reactions** 
  + Avoid talking, thinking, and having feelings about the traumatic event
  + Avoid reminders of the event (places and people connected to what happened)
  + Restricted emotions; feeling numb
  + Feelings of detachment and estrangement from others; social withdrawal
  + Loss of interest in usually pleasurable activities
  + Constantly being “on the lookout” for danger, startling easily, or being jumpy
  + Irritability or outbursts of anger, feeling “on edge”
  + Difficulty falling or staying asleep, problems concentrating or paying attention

**Reactions to trauma and loss reminders**

* Reactions to places, people, sights, sounds, smells, and feelings that are reminders of the disaster
* Reminders can bring on distressing mental images, thoughts, and emotional/physical reactions
* Common examples include sudden loud noises, odors, sirens, locations where the disaster occurred, seeing people with disabilities, funerals, anniversaries of the disaster, and television/radio news about the disaster

**Positive changes in priorities, worldview, and expectations**

* Enhanced appreciation that family and friends are precious and important
* Meeting the challenge of addressing difficulties (by taking positive action steps, changing the focus of thoughts, using humor, acceptance)
* Shifting expectations about what to expect from day to day and about what is considered a “good day”
* Shifting priorities to focus more on quality time with family or friends
* Increased commitment to self, family, friends, and spiritual/religious faith

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**When a Loved One Dies, Common Reactions Include:**

* Feeling confused, numb, disbelief, bewildered, or lost
* Feeling angry at the person who died or at people considered responsible for the death
* Strong physical reactions such as nausea, fatigue, shakiness, and muscle weakness
* Feeling guilty for still being alive

**Physical arousal reactions**

* Constantly being “on the lookout” for danger, startling easily, or being jumpy
* Irritability or outbursts of anger, feeling “on edge”
* Difficulty falling or staying asleep, problems concentrating or paying attention

**Reactions to trauma and loss reminders**

* Reactions to places, people, sights, sounds, smells, and feelings that are reminders of the disaster Reminders can bring on distressing mental images, thoughts, and emotional/physical reactions
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* Shifting expectations about what to expect from day to day and about what is considered a “good day”
* Shifting priorities to focus more on quality time with family or friends
* Increased commitment to self, family, friends, and spiritual/religious faith

**When There Is a Significant Loss, Common Reactions Include:**

* Feeling confused, numb, disbelief, bewildered, or lost
* Feeling angry about the loss or blaming others for the loss
* Strong physical reactions such as nausea, fatigue, shakiness, and muscle weakness
* Feeling guilty for still being alive
* Intense emotions such as extreme sadness, anger, or fear
* Increased risk for physical illness and injury
* Decreased productivity or difficulty making decisions
* Having thoughts about the loss, even when you don’t want to
* Longing, missing, and wanting to search for a safe and familiar place
* Children are particularly likely to worry that they or a parent might die
* Children may become anxious when separated from caregivers or other loved ones

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What Helps** | **What Doesn’t Help** |
| Talking to another person for support or spending time with others | Using alcohol or drugs to cope |
| Engaging in positive distracting activities (sports, hobbies, reading) | Extreme avoidance of thinking or talking about the event or a death of a loved one |
| Getting adequate rest and eating healthy meals | Violence or conflict |
| Trying to maintain a normal schedule | Overeating or failing to eat |
| Scheduling pleasant activities | Excessive use of TV or computer games |
| Taking breaks | Blaming others |
| Reminiscing about a loved one who has died | Working too much |
| Focusing on something practical that you can do right now to manage the situation better | Extreme withdrawal from family or friends |
| Using relaxation methods (breathing exercises, meditation, calming self-talk, soothing music) | Not taking care of yourself |
| Participating in a support group, spiritual practices | Doing risky things (driving recklessly, substance abuse, not taking adequate precautions) |
| Exercising in moderation | Withdrawing from pleasant activities |
| Keeping a journal |  |
| Seeking counseling |  |

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Those who desire to talk to a professional Aspen Pointe crisis counselor can call 572-6100 for assistance. For additional information, visit [www.aspenpointe.org](http://www.aspenpointe.org).

**Black Forest Fire Resources for the  
Colorado Springs Community**

Critical information for evacuees

- To or to register yourself as safe and well, visit www.redcross.org/safeandwell.

- Evacuees seeking a place to stay can head to a Red Cross shelter:

- University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Rec Center, 1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway

- Palmer Ridge High School, 19255 Frontage Road, Monument, 867-8600 (accepting pets of evacuees who are staying there)

- Elbert County Fairgrounds, 95 Ute Ave., Kiowa, (303) 621-3152

- The shelter at New Life Church was closed due to smoke.

- Soldiers and families dislocated by the fire can find shelter at Fort Carson's Youth Center, Building 1518, 5950 Ware St., 526-2680. The center can house up to 100 people. Those in need of shelter will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. The center also will accept pets of those who are staying there.

- Evacuees seeking information on the status of their homes can visit www.bit.ly/14wdoOR to view a preliminary home assessment document from the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.

- The county's Disaster Assistance Center is located at the El Paso County Citizens Service Center, 1675 W. Garden of the Gods Road, 444-8300. It's open daily from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Organizations represented at the center include AspenPointe, Colorado Springs Utilities, AAA, various insurance companies and various county offices such as El Paso County Public Health. For more information on the center, visit www.bit.ly/OZGako.

- Pikes Peak YMCA locations are welcoming Black Forest fire evacuees, first responders and Colorado Springs residents with no air conditioning to their facilities to "cool down, refresh and shower at no charge" on a space-available basis.

Those wishing to use YMCA facilities should bring identification with them and show it at the door. The facilities offering the service:

- Tri-Lakes, 17250 Jackson Creek Parkway

- Briargate, 4025 Family Place

- Garden Ranch, 2380 Montebello Drive West

- Downtown, 207 North Nevada Avenue

- Southeast, 2190 Jet Wing Drive

- Fountain Valley, 301 East Iowa Ave.

- Cottonwood Creek Recreational Center, 3920 Dublin Blvd.

- Memorial Park Recreational Center, 1605 E. Pikes Peak Ave.

For additional information, visit www.ppymca.org.

- The DoubleTree by Hilton, 1775 E. Cheyenne Mountain Blvd., 576-8900, is offering reduced room rates for evacuees and will accept pets.

- Mercy's Gate, formerly known as Northern Churches Care, is offering evacuees assistance with housing, gas, food and counseling. For assistance, visit 4285 North Academy Blvd. Mondays 4-7 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Thursdays 1-4 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m.-12 p.m. For information, call 277-7470. For updates on the assistance offered by Mercy's Gate, visit www.facebook.com/mercysgate.

Useful information for evacuees

- CenturyLink is offering free emergency call forwarding to customers who are evacuated from their homes and offices due to the Black Forest and Cannn City fires. Calls can be forwarded to an alternate local phone number. To activate the service, customers can call 1-800-573-1311.

- Small-business owners can get help with insurance and disaster relief from the Small Business Development Center at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, 667-3803, sbdc@uccs.edu. For more information, visit www.coloradosbdc.org/coloradosprings.

- All United States Postal Service personnel, mail and operations at the Elbert Post Office have been moved to the nearby Kiowa Post Office. Customers who receive their mail in Elbert through a post office box or on a route can pick up their mail at the Kiowa office, 708 Comanche St., Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 7:30-10:30 a.m.

- Health insurance company Cigna is lifting certain prescription refill restrictions in El Paso and Huerfano counties through July 27. People covered by a Cigna health plan in those counties may refill their prescriptions ahead of their usual "refill too soon" restrictions. Customers with questions are encouraged to call the customer service phone number on their Cigna ID card or 1-800-244-6224.

- Health insurance company Tricare is offering emergency prescription refills to customers in El Paso, Fremont and Huerfano counties through July 11. To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any Tricare retail network pharmacy. To locate one, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303.

Free services for evacuees

- Poor Richard's Restaurant, 324 + N. Tejon St., is offering complimentary pizza and fountain drinks to all evacuees and firefighters. The back play area is available for children to play in. The restaurant is open until 9 p.m. each day.

- First United Methodist Church is offering free childcare to evacuated families Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. so parents can take care of housing and other needs. Lunch and activities will be provided. Childcare providers are trained in caring for children during times of stress, according to the church. For more information, visit www.1ststeps.net.

Help for evacuated animals and pets

- Rocky Mountain Equine, 481-2749, is matching requests with resources for those needing to move large animals.

- Bear Creek Veterinary Care, 960 Pico Point, 685-1177, is taking dogs under 30 pounds, as well as cats. Call to check availability. "There is no charge, and we will keep their pets as long as the evacuation lasts," said the clinic's Stephanie Fernyak via email.

- The Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region, 610 Abbot Lane, 473-1741, is accepting cats, dogs and other "small critters" from the evacuated area only.

- The Elbert County Fairgrounds, 95 Ute Ave., Kiowa, (303) 621-3152, is accepting large animals.

- Aavondale Pet Care Center, 17140 Jones Road, Peyton, 683-4617, and neighboring acreages are taking all types of animals, including reptiles, birds, goats and horses. Check availability.

Locating missing loved ones

- To locate friends and loved ones who've reported themselves as safe and well, visit www.redcross.org/safeandwell.

**Locating lost animals**

- Those who've lost pets and other animals due to the Black Forest fire are advised to call the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region's lost-and-found line at 473-1741, extension 8763. Boarding fees have been temporarily waived.

**Useful information for all community members**

- Citizens seeking information about the fire, including evacuation information, can call 444-8300.

- Front Range air quality was deemed "unhealthy for sensitive groups" on Thursday, according to the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services. To check for updates, visit www.colorado.gov/airquality/advisory.aspx.

- The Peak Vista community health center located at Falcon Elementary School, 12050 Falcon Highway, Peyton, 344-6247, is offering free help to those with respiratory issues. Those of all ages will be seen. Insurance is not required.

- Those feeling stressed out due to local fires might consider speaking with a friend, journaling, getting and giving hugs, and watching their media intake, according to Memorial Health System. The local mental health crisis line is 635-7000. For more mental health tips from Memorial, visit their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/MemorialCOS](http://www.facebook.com/MemorialCOS).

Websites:

* InciWeb Incident Information Center: [www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org)

(then find “Black Forest Fire link which may not be on the first page)

Twitter:

* @epcsheriff

**Black Forest Canyon Fire Resources for UCCS Community**

**Students** who need academic assistance, or have questions, please contact the Dean of Students at 719-255-3838.

University Counseling Center and Trauma Health and Hazards Center are partnering to be able to provide you some resources that you may access both on the phone and in person on campus.

* If you are having some experiences that are concerning you in response to what is happening to you, your family, and your property, please take a look at the list of reactions that are provided in this pamphlet, the tips that may help, and **see how many of the “What Helps” items on page 2 you can implement in your life immediately.**
* **If you are in need of consulting with a clinician, please call one of these numbers:**

Colorado State Employee Assistance Program:

Scott Cassidy: (719) 282 6644 (CO State Employees)

University Counseling Center (UCC): (719) 255 3265 (UCCS Students)

Benek Altayli

Trent Claypool

Cathy Calvert

Debby Patz-Clarke