

# A Guide for Managing Teams Through Natural Disasters

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When a natural disaster threatens our environment, we can feel unsafe, fearful, and uncertain.

As a manager, leading with empathy and compassion increases feelings of safety and support. This contributes to the wellbeing and stability of our teams during critical times.

## How to Lead with Compassion

**Acknowledge what happened.** Directly acknowledging what's happened puts people at ease, by normalizing reactions and conversation.

**Talk about it.** Open conversations build trust and foster a supportive environment where team members feel comfortable doing what they need to care for themselves. Prioritize building an environment where expressing emotion is acceptable and self-care choices are respected.

**Be empathic.** Lead conversations with empathy, compassion, and active listening. Acknowledge the difficulties the event had caused. Encourage team members to share what they need to feel supported.

**Check in regularly.** Not everyone is impacted in the same way. Schedule regular check ins with team members as a way to normalize the potential for long term impact, and to stay in touch as they move forward and cope.



Traumatic events can **evoke a range of emotions**. Add in the stress of managing the workplace and your experience can be even more overwhelming.

# Human Reactions to Trauma

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## Emotional

- Shock or numbness
- Feelings of anxiety, sadness, fear, uncertainty
- Overwhelm

## Cognitive

- Poor concentration, difficulty making decisions
- Confusion or memory loss
- Shortened attention span

## Behavioral

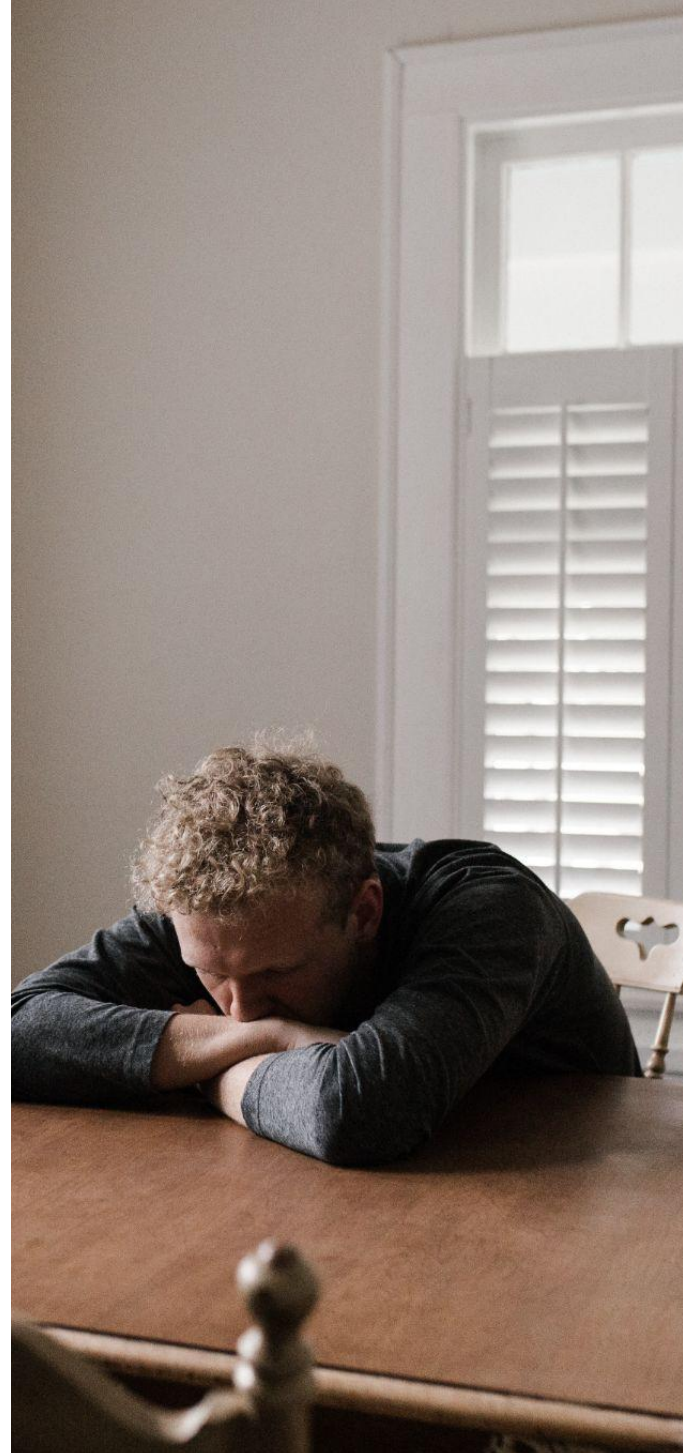
- Irritability
- Withdrawal
- Loss of interest in family, friends, or daily routine

## Physical

- Headaches, nausea, stomach pains, tightness in chest, muscle pain—generally feeling unwell
- Listlessness and feeling tired
- Increased sensitivity to noise or people
- Disturbed sleep or upsetting thoughts, dreams, and nightmares

## Supporting Through Trauma

- Role model and encourage people to share their experience with a trusted person to help process their thoughts and feelings
- Suggest keeping a regular routine, which can help feelings of stability, calm, and safety
- Get in extra self care, including sleep and general down time



With Spring Health, you can access tools such as therapy, in-app exercises, and coaching to help you feel like your best self.

### Get support:

[Benefits.springhealth.com](https://benefits.springhealth.com)

1-855-629-0554

(Select option 2 for 24/7 crisis support to speak to a licensed clinician for in the moment clinical support)