

# How to Manage Reactions to Trauma

When we witness emergencies, it is natural to go into “crisis mode.” When this happens, our stress hormones - adrenaline and cortisol - start to flood our brains and bodies. These hormones allow us to keep moving, but often make our bodies feel on edge, jittery, nauseous, or numb. It’s important to take steps to flush these stress hormones out of our body so we can begin to feel like ourselves again. Remember, we are much more helpful to the youth in our lives when we are taking care of ourselves! Here are some tips to help you take care of yourself:



## Drink cold water!

Hydration is key to eliminating stress hormones from your body, and cold water can calm the brain if it is in a traumatized or crisis state.



## Take deep breaths OUT.

Breathe in normally and then push air out, for as long as you can. This slows our bodies down by calming our central nervous systems, and reduces a stress response.



## Take a break from the news.

Turn off the news and stop reading the papers or electronic media as much as possible. Remember that news cycles often repeat the same information in different ways, so you will likely not miss new information. You are allowed to take a break!



## Exercise large muscle groups.

It’s important to get the trauma out of our bodies. What kind of exercise feels good to you? Try to make time to do it. Even if for a short time, spending time running, playing sports, or doing yoga can help us to get out of our heads and be more grounded in our bodies.



## Find your support system.

Your support system can include friends, family members, your religious or faith community, an existing support group, or a therapist. Discuss fears, feelings, and safety plans. Healing grows in community.

Children and adults who have already experienced trauma, grief, and loss may be more impacted by mass tragedies in the news. It may bring up feelings from previous traumas, and more intense reactions. Be sure to monitor sleep and eating habits, encourage healthy coping skills that have helped before, and take time to listen and support. Consider revisiting support tools used in the past, such as grief groups, individual or group therapy, in-school supportive adults, and mental health services, if reactions to the current tragedy continue past a few weeks.

## Learn more about Uplift’s services

Uplift’s **Philly HopeLine** is a free, confidential helpline staffed by our Master’s level clinicians. The Philly HopeLine is open to all youth and caregiver in the Philadelphia region. Call if you’d like to sign up for grief groups, receive emotional or grief support, identify community resources, or get on the list for an in-school grief group. Interpretation service is available for more than 100 languages. Dial **833-PHL-HOPE (833-745-4673)** to speak to an Uplift clinician, or email [PHLHope@UpliftPhilly.org](mailto:PHLHope@UpliftPhilly.org).

A tip sheet from

**Uplift Center for Grieving Children**

Office: 267-437-3123

Philly HopeLine: 833-745-4673

**[www.UpliftPhilly.org](http://www.UpliftPhilly.org)**

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