

## Help for Youth Coping During a Flood

Life can be particularly hard on young people during a flood. You may have thoughts and fears that are normal for everyone during this kind of an emergency. You may even feel helpless to find a way to help and slide into despair or depression, unless you look after yourself.

These are some common thoughts young people have during emergencies like a major flood:

I must be losing it.	<b>What you are feeling is a common reaction to an unusual, emergency situation.</b>
I've got this under control. I don't need help.	<b>Even though you're very capable and can deal with a lot, everybody needs help from their friends and family, sometimes.</b>
No one else understands.	<b>It's true that your feelings and experiences are unique to you. But other people are going through this, just like you are. Everyone has a different way to make sense of what is happening in an emergency.</b>
Everything is gone forever.	<b>Give yourself time to deal with losses. Favourite things may be lost, but it's important to remember that over time, you will find and create new treasures.</b>
Nothing will ever be the same.	<b>While some things are changed forever, most things in your daily life will return to normal in time.</b>
If one more person crosses me, I'm going to snap!	<b>It's normal to feel irritable, angry and frustrated when you're in stressful situations. Many people suffer a lot of hurt and damage because of the flood and react in unusual ways. Be patient with others and yourself.</b>
I should have... I could have... If only I had...	<b>People often think that bad things happen because they did or didn't do something. This isn't true! No one person can control the effects of a flood.</b>

## **There are lots of healthy ways to cope with your stress:**

- Talk to people you trust about your feelings – face to face, email, text, phone. This could be a friend, parent, elder, teacher, counsellor or a phone line support person.
- Have fun! Do things you enjoy. Remember physical activity/exercise can lower stress and make you feel happier and energized.
- Find ways to relax. Take a walk, read, listen to music, watch a movie, have a nap, pray, smudge, do yoga, do deep breathing, attend a spiritual ceremony or join a support group. For more relaxation tips, go to: [www.de-stress.ca](http://www.de-stress.ca).
- Ask your friends what helps them feel better and cope with the stress.
- Tell a story about how the flood has affected you: draw, write, sing, dance, journal, take photos.
- Think about times in the past when things were difficult for you, and what helped you get through the hard times then.
- Helping out others when you're stressed takes you outside your own troubles for awhile.
- Volunteer to help with the flood efforts, fundraise, comfort/reach out to family and friends.
- Find a way to remember both the good and the bad things during the emergency (ex: shoot a video, write, take pictures).
- Try not to be too hard on yourself or others.

## **Use outside support and resources when you need them**

If you, your family, friends or neighbours are having a hard time dealing with stress, you can get help:

- Health Links – Info Santé can help you find resources through your local regional health authority or community mental health services office. Call 204-788-8200 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-888-315-9257; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Manitobans can call Manitoba Farm and Rural Support Services at 1-866-367-3276 toll free; 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. weekdays. Or, go to [www.ruralsupport.ca](http://www.ruralsupport.ca).
- Clinic Community Health Centre 24-hour Crisis Line can provide counselling and referrals for all Manitobans. Call 204-786-8686 in Winnipeg; toll free 1-888-322-3019; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Kids Help Phone has trained counsellors who help young people all across the province. Call: 1-800-668-6868 toll free; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Youth Emergency Crisis Stabilization System has a phone line for young people all across the province. Call 204-949-4777 in Winnipeg; 1-888-383-2776 toll free; 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- If you or someone you know is thinking of suicide, the Manitoba Suicide Line is available to all Manitobans. Call 1-877-435-7170 toll free; 24 hours a day, seven days a week; or go to [www.reasonstolive.ca](http://www.reasonstolive.ca).