



Trauma and Disaster: Helping Our Helpers, Helping Ourselves!

We all want to do our part to help those who have been impacted by disaster. It is important to remember this includes helping ourselves!

Vicarious Trauma:

- You **do not** have to experience a traumatic event first-hand in order to experience trauma connected to the event.
- **Vicarious trauma** refers to negative impacts on your physical and mental health that can result from being exposed to traumatic images and stories, and from responding to traumatic events. It can take many forms, including depression, anxiety, nightmares, and/or overwhelming fear or sadness that can limit your ability to function and live well.
- People who are helping those who have been directly impacted by trauma can be at particular risk to experiencing vicarious trauma.

Self-Care:

Practicing self-care is one way to foster resilience and prevent or limit vicarious trauma. Some self-care strategies include:

- Unplug! Limit your exposure to media images and coverage of the event
- Get adequate rest, nutrition and exercise
- Enjoy moments of fun, leisure, and activity with friends and family
- Know your limits! Offer a listening ear and practical services when you are able, and step back when you are not. You cannot fill someone else's bucket when yours is empty!
- Get help! If you are experiencing vicarious trauma, connect with people and organizations that can help you, including:

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Central Alberta, 403 342 2266
<http://reddeer.cmha.ca>

Alberta Mental Health and Addictions Services, 403 340 5466
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/amh.aspx>

Red Deer Primary Care Network, 403 343 9100
<http://www.reddeerpcn.com/>

Mental Health Helpline: 1-877-303-2642
Offers help for mental health concerns for Albertans, 24 Hours

**we can
help**