

Feeling Fatigue Due to Disasters?

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BATON ROUGE, La. – Many Louisianans are struggling to recover from the successive blows of Hurricanes Laura, Delta and Zeta on top of the nearly yearlong stress and worries of a pandemic. The same is true throughout the nation where hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters came one after another while Covid-19 fears spread.

It is normal for any disaster response to increase stress and fatigue. One of the symptoms is finding it hard to make decisions when so many decisions must be made about your recovery. One good decision is to register with FEMA. The process doesn't have to be intimidating, and there are certain steps to take, information you need to provide, and follow-up material to provide if requested.

For survivors of Hurricane Zeta, there are two immediate actions you need to take. First, file a claim with your insurance company if you have not already done so; then, register with FEMA before March 15 by:

- Going online at disasterassistance.gov;
- Downloading the FEMA app; or
- Calling the FEMA Helpline: 800-621-3362 or TTY 800-462-7585. The toll-free telephone lines operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week.

When it comes to registering and completing a FEMA application, specialists will help you through the process to be sure you receive the assistance you may be eligible for.

Survivors of Hurricanes Laura and Delta who are already registered with FEMA may find that the process of recovery sometimes feels like an impossible task.

Stress related to the disaster, which could be compassion fatigue, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and other stress-related health issues, may be why it can be difficult to make decisions. Feeling frustrated, arguing more and being physically and mentally drained are other symptoms of emotional exhaustion that can reshape how people make choices. You may not be eating or sleeping or



doing too much of both. You are not alone. These are human reactions to the strain of adapting over and over to situations that threaten your survival and/or ability to cope.

The good news is that with each positive action you add towards your recovery, you feel better and more in control. One cost-free action you can take now is creating and practicing a family plan for future emergencies.

You can also meet with your insurance agent to be sure your coverage will address your future needs. Be sure to check with the agent about flood insurance, which pays for flood damage even when a disaster is not declared by FEMA.

Most responses to stress related to disasters are temporary and will go away over time. Stress response during disasters is normal.

If you would like to speak with someone for mental/emotional support, the Crisis Counseling hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 800-985-5990 (TTY 800-846-8517) or text TalkWithUs (Spanish-speakers text: Hablanos) to 66746 to be immediately connected with a professional counselor who will help callers through disaster-related emotional distress. This toll-free, multilingual and confidential free service is available to everyone in the state.

For the latest information on Hurricane Laura, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4559](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4559). For updates on Hurricane Delta, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4570](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4570). Hurricane Zeta material is found at [fema.gov/disaster/4577](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4577). Follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion6.

