



# In the Face of **DISASTER**

## Navigating Trauma After a Natural Disaster

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Kentucky Extension Homemakers Association (KEHA) Leader Lesson

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# Lesson Objectives

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- Understanding trauma and its effect on the body
- Recognizing signs of trauma
- Coping with trauma
- Helping others cope with trauma



# Difficult Content Warning

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- Painful memories are possible.
- You might experience emotional discomfort.
- It's OK to step away.



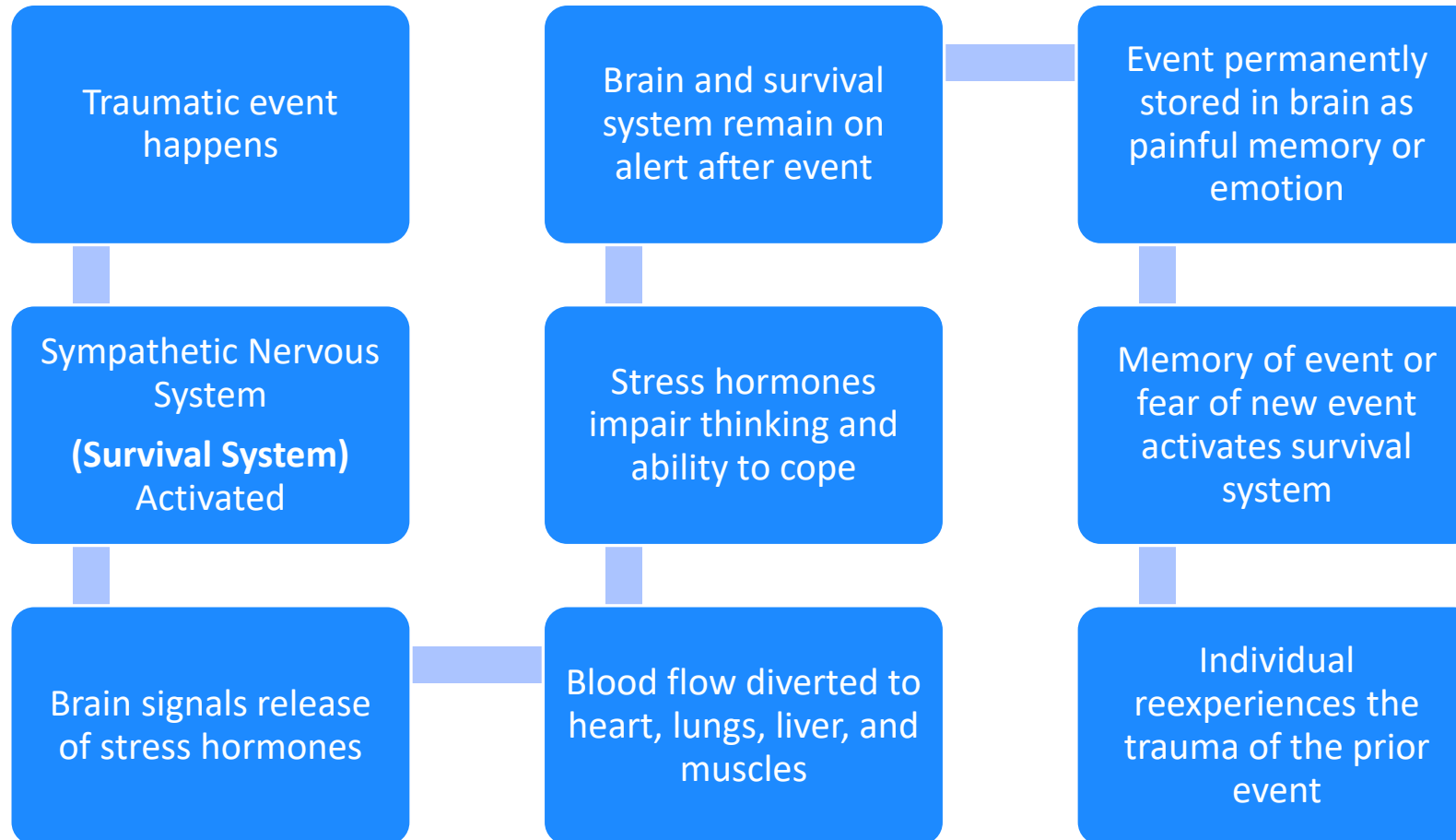
# Defining Trauma

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- Nervous system response to uncontrollable (natural disaster) event
- Event = physically life-threatening or emotionally harming
- Highest amount of stress
- Disrupts our ability to cope



# How Does Trauma Affect the Body?



# Signs of Trauma

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## **Immediate (<3 months after event)**

- Using items around you to protect your head
- Feeling numb or like nothing is real
- Problems focusing or feeling confused
- Easily startled or scared
- Intense anger or sadness
- Heart races when thinking about the event
- Difficulty sleeping or having nightmares about the disaster

## **Long-term (>3 months after event)**

- Feeling irritable or bitter
- Difficulty thinking or making decisions
- Socially isolating from family or friends
- Avoiding places or things that bring back painful memories of the event
- Easily startled or scared by certain sights or sounds
- Worrying or fearful about future disasters

# Prioritize Basic Needs

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- Food (nonperishable)
- Water (bottled)
- Safety (avoid unsafe conditions)
- Shelter (undamaged structures)
- Clothing (dry socks, pants, shirt, jacket)



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

# Caring for Yourself and Others

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- Use compassion and caring in dealing with others.
- Offer supportive words to yourself and others.
- Spend time or reach out to family and friends daily.
- Avoid the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Reduce or avoid consumption of news.
- Delay making major life decisions.
- Acknowledge your emotions. One day, you may feel angry, then feel overwhelmed or sad.
- Give yourself grace. Feeling sad, worried, and angry is OK.
- Try to get “good” sleep.
- Remain flexible. Changes will occur.
- Seek professional support from a physician or counselor.



# Restoring Routine

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- Eat at the same time each day.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Take time for rest to boost your recovery.
- If possible, take your medicines.
- Take time to grieve.
- Talk daily to someone you trust.
- Wake up and go to bed at the same time.



# Helping Others

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- Keep interactions compassionate.
- Prioritize physical safety and basic needs.
- Look for signs of trauma and provide support.
- Give information about coping and connecting with professionals.
- DO NOT make promises.
- Give information, DO NOT give advice.



**9888**

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# In the Face of DISASTER

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