

## FAMILY SUPPORT



### Helping Children Cope

Children may become clingy, irritable, withdrawn, fearful, or ask the same questions repeatedly. They may return to play quickly and show distress later.

#### Children benefit from:

- Honest, age-appropriate information
- Calm reassurance about what is known and what will happen next
- Predictable routines whenever possible
- Time to play, draw, talk, and ask questions
- Permission to feel sad, worried, angry, or relieved
- Protection from adult conversations they cannot understand or change
- Minimize exposure to disturbing images and radio or television coverage of the event, especially when children may see or hear it.

**Tell children clearly that the disaster was not their fault. Seek additional support when changes in sleep, behaviour, school functioning, or physical complaints persist.**



### Be Patient with Yourself

Recovery rarely follows a predictable timeline. Feeling better for a period and then grieving again does not mean you are going backward. Insurance decisions, rebuilding, anniversaries, or unexpected reminders may bring the loss back sharply.

**Adapting to a major loss takes time.**

## SUPPORT AND RESOURCES



### When to Reach Out for Additional Support

Consider speaking with a health-care provider, counsellor, or other support when:

- Distress is intense, worsening, or present most days
- Daily tasks feel impossible
- Sleep problems continue
- Anxiety, sadness, hopelessness, or anger remain hard to manage
- You withdraw from others
- Alcohol or other substance use is increasing or interfering with daily life
- You are concerned about a child or family member

**Support can address both grief and the strain of practical recovery.**

#### For Immediate Support

**9-1-1** Immediate danger or urgent medical need.

**9-8-8** Call or text for suicide crisis support, 24/7 in Canada.

**310-6789** BC Mental Health & Crisis Response; no area code.

**1-800-588-8717** KUU-US Indigenous Crisis & Support Line.

**2-1-1** Dial or text for community programs and local recovery resources.

**8-1-1** HealthLink BC health information and service navigation.



#### PHSA Provincial Psychosocial Services

Resources and program information

[dpsprogram@phsa.ca](mailto:dpsprogram@phsa.ca)

Scan the code or visit [PHSA.ca](https://phsa.ca) → HEMBC → Provincial Psychosocial Services

DRAFT FOR REVIEW | JULY 2026

## LOSS AND RECOVERY

### WHEN YOU HAVE LOST YOUR HOME AND POSSESSIONS

**Coping with grief after a wildfire, structural fire, flood, or other disaster**

Losing your home means more than losing a building. It can mean losing irreplaceable possessions, family history, routine, privacy, and the place where daily life felt familiar.

**The emotional impact may be as demanding as the practical work of recovery.**



**YOUR REACTIONS ARE UNDERSTANDABLE. SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE.**

PHSA | HEALTH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BC  
PROVINCIAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES



## Your Reactions Are Normal

After a sudden, devastating loss, you may experience:

- Shock or disbelief
- Sadness and grief
- Anger or frustration
- Guilt about what happened or why outcomes differed
- Anxiety about the future
- Feeling numb or overwhelmed
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating

Reactions may change from hour to hour and return when you encounter debris, paperwork, rebuilding decisions, anniversaries, or reminders of what was lost.

**These reactions are common after traumatic loss.  
There is no single correct way to grieve or recover.**

### What was lost matters.

You are allowed to grieve ordinary objects, routines, privacy, and the place you called home.



## You Are Grieving More Than a Home

### A home often represents:

- Safety and privacy
- Family traditions and memories
- Identity and belonging
- Routine, comfort, and independence

It is natural to mourn photographs, keepsakes, children's artwork, heirlooms, collections, and ordinary objects tied to daily life. Their loss is real, even when attention is focused on replacing practical items.



## Take Recovery at a Manageable Pace

The tasks ahead can feel overwhelming. Try to:

- Focus on today's most immediate needs.
- Write down tasks and decisions so you do not have to hold everything in memory.
- Accept practical help with calls, meals, transportation, forms, or childcare.
- Take breaks before exhaustion makes decisions harder.
- Delay non-urgent decisions when possible.

**You do not need to solve the entire recovery at once.**



## Stay Connected

- Talk with people you trust.
- Share as much or as little as feels helpful.
- Stay in contact with neighbours and others affected.
- Let people know what kind of help would be useful.
- Accept support without feeling you must comfort everyone else.

**You are not expected to carry this alone.**

## Take Care of Yourself

During recovery, basic needs can be easy to overlook. Try to:

- Eat regularly and drink water, even when appetite is low.
- Rest when you can and keep a basic sleep routine.
- Continue familiar activities that bring comfort or structure.
- Limit repeated exposure to images, news, and social media about the event.
- Avoid increasing alcohol or other substance use to manage grief or sleep.

**Looking after your body can make emotional and practical demands more manageable.**

### REMEMBER

**Recovery is not forgetting. It is gradually rebuilding safety, routine, and connection while making room for what was lost.**