

Hope in the
Heartland



Presented by High Plains Mental Health Center
Natoma, Kansas
Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021



24/7 Crisis Support:
1-800-432-0333

<https://hpmhc.com>

The recent wind storm, wild fires and deep personal loss suffered by many can be defined as a critical incident. A critical incident is any event outside the usual realm of human experience that is markedly distressing.

Following such a distressing event, it is common to experience traumatic stress, which is very intense feelings and emotions following a crisis event.

After experiencing traumatic stress, it is common to go through a wide range of emotional and physical reactions. These might appear immediately after the event or some time later, and symptoms can last for a few days, a few weeks, or even longer. This can include typical reactions and feelings, such as grief, anger or sorrow, and can be part of the healing process, even though such feelings can be uncomfortable or painful.

During these extremely difficult times, it's important to find ways to manage the stress you may be feeling.

- Talk to others and share your feelings openly and honestly. Effective communication and “venting” can be helpful.
- To the extent possible, take good care of yourself by eating healthy, exercising regularly and try to get an appropriate amount of sleep (ideally, at least 7 hours per night).
- Try to make time for activities you find relaxing and enjoyable, such as spending time with family, spending time in nature, taking a walk, going fishing, watching a good movie, etc. The possibilities are endless, but it should be a healthy activity that you enjoy!
- During this difficult time, it's helpful to keep your life as routine as possible. Focus on areas you can control, such as when you go to bed, when you wake up, when you eat dinner, etc. Having some predictability in

your routines and patterns can help provide some sense of stability in uncertain times.

- Avoid turning to alcohol or drugs (including excessive caffeine) as a way to cope through the difficult times and painful emotions.

After experiencing a traumatic event, people can experience a wide range of signs (outward changes noticeable by others) and symptoms (internal feelings and changes that are not externally visible).

Signs and symptoms can include:

Emotional: Anger, anxiety, fear, guilt, grief, denial, sadness, depression, uncertainty, over-sensitivity, irritability, frustration, emotional shock or numbing, and (rarely) severe panic or amnesia of the event

Physical: Stomachache, diarrhea/vomiting, feeling weak, chills, sweating, dizziness, fatigue, difficulty breathing, rapid heart rate, elevated blood pressure, muscle tremors, headache, sleep disturbance, nightmares, grinding teeth*

*It can be difficult to determine if certain physical symptoms are due to a physical health condition or mental distress. If you are experiencing these symptoms, please see a primary health care provider for evaluation.

Behavioral: Feeling jittery, startling easily, hyper vigilance, change in sleep habits or appetite, social withdrawal, changes in typical behavior, loss of interest in activities and hobbies, emotional outbursts, avoidance of thoughts/situations related to the event, feeling overly suspicious, change in sexual function

Cognitive: Confusion, difficulty remembering or making decisions, flashbacks, nightmares, preoccupation with the event, intrusive thoughts or images

As the recovery process continues from recent events, it is important to pay attention to your own mental and emotional wellbeing, as well as to the signs and symptoms of family members and close friends also affected. Kansans are good at taking care of their neighbors, and this is another example of how we can help each other rebuild and recover!

If troubling signs and symptoms persist, become more severe, or impact daily life - affecting one's ability to live, love, laugh and learn - please reach out for professional support.

Mental health care is health care! We need to take care of our brain just like we need to take care of our heart and lungs. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, never a sign of weakness.

There is HELP. There is HOPE! Available resources include:

High Plains Mental Health Center, with 23 service locations in the 20 counties of Northwest Kansas.

Telehealth appointments are available via Zoom.

Sliding fee scale is available for qualifying clients who are uninsured or underinsured.

Critical Incident Stress Management services are available to agencies within our 20 counties at no cost to provide initial trauma de-briefing following catastrophic events.

To learn more, please call us. Regular office number: 785-628-2871

Other resources: www.kansasagstress.org

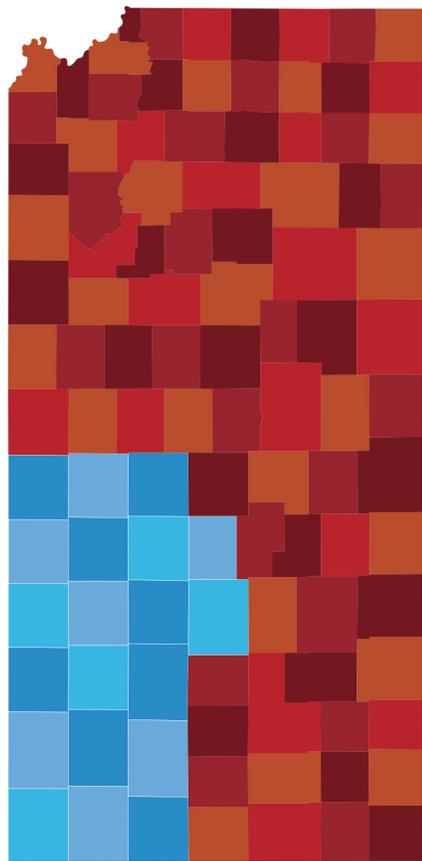
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 or text 741741

HPMHC 24/7 Crisis Hotline: 1-800-432-0333

Outreach Office and Service Locations

● Community Outreach Offices ★ Full-Time Service Locations

Cheyenne	Rawlins	Decatur	Norton	Phillips	Smith
●	●	●	★	★	●
Sherman	Thomas	Sheridan	Graham	Rooks	Osborne
★	★	●	●	●	★
Wallace	Logan	Gove	Trego	Ellis	Russell
●	●	●	●	★ ●	●
			Ness	Rush	
			●	●	



Proudly Serving 20 Northwest Kansas Counties
 High Plains Mental Health Center
 208 E. 7th, Hays, KS 67601
hpmhc.com