

Ease Anxiety & Support Immunity In a Disaster



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Mira Dessy

Mold Week! on Women's Wellness Radio

When faced with a disaster like a hurricane, you need to recognize that you do what you can where you are at the moment. During the first few weeks after a flood you will have a lot of people making meals for you & your family and you need to be grateful for that. Hurricane Harvey stomped many people and flooded their houses. Many of them have had to work 12 hours a day and the last thing they would want to do is cook.

In our modern go-go society we live in the moment (what's in front of us? what can we take care of?) and we forget about the whole mind-body connection. But when we stop to think about that inner nourishment, allow ourselves to be taken care of and feel like someone is paying attention and wants to help, that's just as nourishing as a meal. And a home-cooked meal you receive from someone out of their real love for you and wanting to help you is some real good energy you'll be taking into your body.

Going through the hurricane was very scary for many people and on thinking about it, you'd get a little overwhelmed. Water goes wherever it will go! Also, once the storm had moved on and abetted, water was still flowing into the areas affected and continuing to rise and flood. It was heartbreaking.

Receiving Support

To have someone listen to your story and let the emotions come off is incredibly helpful.

This is a big challenge you're going through even if some people don't realize it. It's a huge change of lifestyle and you lose many things in your home including the destruction of your

house. So acknowledging it is a big deal and very healthy to address those layers of loss and shock.

In the first week post-hurricane, there were still national & coast guards flying overhead, lots of heavy equipment and emergency vehicles on the road. And for Mira Dessy, every time she heard a helicopter or emergency vehicle she could feel her entire body tighten up! And it got a little hard to breathe for some seconds because there was that anxiety "Oh, what now?"

Remediating Your Home

In the hot humid climates, you've got to get your stuff out of your house as quickly as you can. You need to go in and figure out how far up the house is wet because the truth of the matter is that in most homes, the water mark was high and the wet mark higher because the water wicks up in the dry wall and insulation.

Mira advises to look around your home and look at the four walls in every single room to see just how much is in. We're surrounded by walls and feel safe but we don't realize how much that is until we have to rip it out.

You also can't get sentimental and say you wouldn't want to get rid of your stuff or rip out because it's too expensive to take it out. And getting things out doesn't mean there isn't spores and harmful stuff present.

Mira did research and discovered that the proper thing to use for the first spray down was borax. She used 1 gallon of hot water, 1 cup of borax, ½ cup of cleaning strength vinegar. This vinegar is a little stronger than regular cooking vinegar. She made a lot of it and sprayed down her house and her daughter's twice to make sure they got rid of as much of the mold and mildew as they could.

Afterwards she used [Benefect](#) which has the active ingredient thymol which is very good for killing spores, mold and bacteria. Friends helped in buying and sending it to them because they knew she was too busy to look it up and order it herself. And this is where having a community, interacting on social media & reaching out in a number of different ways is so helpful.

"It doesn't really matter how much water you've got in your home because it's going to disrupt your life. A little bit of water can do a lot of damage."

Community Support

The other thing is that if you can't go and help someone tear down their house because you're helping another person, then it's ok. If there's something else you can do for other people then that's great.

Community support is very helpful but we should remember to do it every time and not only during a crisis. After a couple of weeks things may start to go back to normal but for people who were affected by a hurricane this is for the long haul!

Some people are going to have long term health issues, long term housing issues and other long term impacts. We have to remember that it's about taking care of all of you and staying as healthy as possible, and essentially building a new normal.

Dealing with Emotions Following a Disaster

There's a lot of overwhelm and exhaustion following a disaster.

There are a lot of emotions and it's like being on an emotional rollercoaster. And one important thing people need to do is to stop feeling guilty because they didn't help as much as they could have. Others worry over something they think they should have done, while other people feel guilty because they're mourning the loss of their stuff.

Some affected people may feel guilty because someone else had something worse than they did. But guilt doesn't solve anything; it just makes everybody feel bad.

There are times when you may be going along and doing fine and something happens, or you think of something, or something triggers you and you get sad all of a sudden. That part is challenging but you simply need to recognize that, acknowledge it, be that way for a minute and then try and find ways to move through it.

So during a crisis or disaster, it's ok to be emotional, cry and be honest with where you are right now. Try to be proactive and focus on getting things done to the best of your ability.

Managing Less After a Disaster

Following a flood, you need to really think about what you need to make your life simpler. In this modern life we get so caught up in personal things and are so busy moving forward. But after such a disaster you've got to pack it all out and move out!

We have learned to grow into large spaces. But it's all just stuff and not permanent although it is valid to grieve because you've spent your time and money on it, and it's stuff that you love. It's also natural to think at this time that you should simplify.

The transition from one to the other can be quite a rollercoaster of emotions for you. For instance you'd feel like you need to buy new stuff, but what if it gets ruined again? There's a sense of anticipation of what's coming next!

And there's also the frustration of not knowing where things are. You take what used to be an orderly life and turn it upside up and sort of make it free-form, and that is not something where're used to. We had this routine and then it changes! And then you have to worry about it as you clean up.

Changes Made by Mira Dessy

After the devastation of the hurricane, Mira is bumping up her supplemental support. She's boosting her system against mold exposure, supporting her adrenals, making sure she gets some good sleep, making sure she's digesting well and detoxing well.

Mira also makes sure that she gets regular balanced meals, nourishing herself and taking essential oils, doing meditative practices, and all those things which are part of taking care of oneself. That way she can also take good care of her family.

Mira reached out to her colleagues for help and community support. She upped her Tryptophan which she takes 1 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and 2 an hour before bed. She's also taking B6. That way she gets good sleep and feels better in the morning.

You need to support your adrenal glands which produce cortisol, a stress hormone. When you're in a situation like this stress goes way up. Extended cortisol for a long period of time is going to interfere with sleep and have an impact on how well your body processes everything that's going on, both emotionally and physically.

You also need to support the liver and kidneys through detox. Mira is doing some detox and taking Ashwagandha, doing detox formulas and tea just to help stay calm and level, and adding nutritional support for detox pathways.

For food ensure that you get some greens (Mira takes some green powder) and make sure that you're getting enough proteins. You should then start getting back to eating on a more balanced schedule because before it was whatever whenever.

Ensure that you're getting regular nutritious meals and that you're getting enough vegetables because at the beginning you get to eat mostly what you can and what people give you. But just as your emotional recovery and house recovery are important, your health needs to recover!

Other Recommendations

Here are a couple of things that can be helpful:

1. Box breathing - When you get very overwhelmed and start feeling really tight in your throat and feeling yourself getting a little panicky, remember to stop and breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth to do even-measured breathing. So take 4 in, hold for 4, then 4 out. You may also do 6 in, hold for 6 and then 6 out. But just doing that rhythmic breathing really helps to calm your adrenals, lower blood pressure and get rid of that shaky feeling.
2. Walking meditation – This worked well for Mira. Find a path and walk slowly without having to feel like you have to be somewhere in a hurry and allow your mind to wonder a little bit and let go.
3. Be willing to talk to people and open up about how you're feeling - A lot of people feel like they don't want to bother somebody or they feel like they're whining. But the truth is that people who love you want to know, they want to hear it and they want to help you. And by listening they can help you. As you verbalize you're actually letting go of some of the emotions but when you keep it all pent up inside, that's when it builds.

Also it's important to be willing to tell people 'I can't talk about that right now'. Because sometimes people may want to dig in and share a lot of horror stories and you don't really want to go there.