



**American  
Red Cross**

**Santa Cruz County Chapter**

2960 Soquel Avenue  
Santa Cruz, CA 95062  
Tel: 831-462-2881  
Fax: 831-464-5483  
[www.sccredcross.org](http://www.sccredcross.org)

## **TIPS FOR COPING WHEN THREAT OF A DISASTER**

- Not knowing when, or if, an emergency situation will come our way can increase stress levels, yet practicing normal stress reduction strategies is even more important at this time for you and your family; consider use of relaxing music, visual imagery, family games, stretching, etc. Reassure one another that preparing in advance is more effective than worrying in advance. You will be notified if specific actions need to be taken. Staying calm helps you and is especially important for children. Rely on facts not rumors that can elicit fear.
- Know that you are not alone. There are many local agencies that are well trained and available to assist you, specifically, our local Santa Cruz County Chapter of the American Red Cross at (831) 462-2881.
- Maintain open communication. Assure children they are safe and will be protected. Limit children's exposure as well as your own to graphic images of the incident. Stay informed with official updates.
- Check-in with neighbors/family and share in offering support to each other. Check your supplies without overstocking, or doing panicky buying.
- Recall times when you have handled previous challenges and call on those abilities at this time. Focusing on your strengths will enhance effective coping.
- Keep an optimistic outlook and put the matter into perspective.
- Maintain a normal schedule when possible. Consider volunteering for ARC, or other agencies, it can enhance feelings of usefulness and of being in control.
- Stay hydrated, eat a healthy diet, maintain sufficient sleep and exercise.
- Do not call 911, unless an emergency. Call "211" for a complete listing of local resources. Remember, your community is there for you.

Diane Bridgeman, Ph.D; mental health volunteer  
3/18/11

**Together we prepare**

3/11/11