

Winter Storms & Mental Health



Winter storms can include snow, sleet, freezing rain and ice. All North Carolina communities can experience these severe weather conditions, and they don't always know ahead of time! It's important to be ready to lose heat, power, internet and phone service, sometimes for days, during December, January and February. Sometimes winter storms can also hit unexpectedly outside of the usual season.

As it gets dark earlier in the day and cold weather sets in, people often talk about "winter blues," or lower moods during the season. It can be a difficult, isolating time of year even without harsh winter storms. Resources are available to help North Carolinians support their mental and behavioral health throughout colder months to reduce loneliness and feel more prepared for the winter season and storms.



Ways to support mental and emotional health before a winter storm

- Build a seven-day emergency kit, including pantry-safe foods and bottles of water
- Layer up with warm clothing and blankets
- Take steps to winterize your home, (e.g., seal windows, drip faucets and clear gutters)
- Make a plan to stay in touch with loved ones
- Call or text a friend, or plan a visit in person
- Stock up on indoor heating supplies and check safety instructions
- Continue favorite, relaxing activities
- Check weather and emergency alerts only as needed
- Remain in care or treatment as recommended
- Find mental health support if you're struggling

RESOURCES

- Get Ready for Winter: [Ready.gov/Winter-Ready](https://www.ready.gov/Winter-Ready)
- Winter Safety: [Bit.ly/RedCrossWinter](https://www.bit.ly/RedCrossWinter)
- Tips and Tools to Winterize: [Bit.ly/NCReadyWinter](https://www.bit.ly/NCReadyWinter)
- Make a Game Plan: [Ready.gov/Plan](https://www.ready.gov/Plan)
- Emergency Alerts: [NCDPS.gov/emergency-alerts](https://www.ncdps.gov/emergency-alerts)
- Free, 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline: [800-985-5990](tel:800-985-5990) (Use videophone for ASL)
- Winter Prep for People with Disabilities: [Bit.ly/DisabilityRightsNCWinter](https://www.bit.ly/DisabilityRightsNCWinter)
- Disability-Specific Guidance: [Ready.gov/Disability](https://www.ready.gov/Disability)
- Caregiver Guidance: [Ready.gov/Caregivers](https://www.ready.gov/Caregivers)

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Winter storms, with or without warning, can feel scary and overwhelming. It's important to take care of yourself and reach out for help whenever you need it – before, during or after a storm. There are also resources to guide people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as caregivers, so they can navigate severe weather, stay connected and get support.



Ways to support mental and emotional health after a winter storm

- Keep in touch with family and friends
- Make time to eat, rest and take a breath
- Relax: Watch TV, read, listen to music or exercise
- Limit substances that impact stress levels like caffeine, alcohol, tobacco & others
- Get information and updates from official sources and take regular breaks
- Stay in touch with health care providers to continue treatment
- Know when to reach out for extra help

RESOURCES

- Emergency Information: [ReadyNC.gov](https://www.ReadyNC.gov)
- Beyond Winter Blues: [Bit.ly/SAMHSASAD](https://bit.ly/SAMHSASAD)
- Ways to Cope: [Emergency.cdc.gov/coping](https://www.Emergency.cdc.gov/coping)
- Winter Storm Safety Tips: [Bit.ly/WinterIndoorSafety](https://bit.ly/WinterIndoorSafety)
- IDD Guidance: [Weather.gov/wrn/IntellectualDisabilities](https://www.Weather.gov/wrn/IntellectualDisabilities)
- Disaster Distress Helpline: **800-985-5990**
- 988 Lifeline: Call or text 988 or visit [988Lifeline.org](https://www.988Lifeline.org)
- NC Peer Warmline: **1-855-PEERS NC (1-855-733-7762)**
- Substance Use Support, Resources and Treatment: **800-662-HELP (4357)**, [FindTreatment.gov](https://www.FindTreatment.gov)

Remember, whether you're experiencing winter blues or something more serious, mental health resources and support are always available to help. It's never too early or too late to ask for support. Reach out and get support, NC. ❤️

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