Emotional distress can happen before and after a disaster. Coping strategies include preparation, self-care, and identifying support systems.

People can experience a wide range of emotions before and after a disaster or traumatic event. There’s no right or wrong way to feel. However, it’s important to find healthy ways to cope when these events happen.

Take Care of Yourself and Your Loved Ones
Eating a healthy diet, avoiding the use of drugs and alcohol, and getting regular exercise can reduce stress and anxiety. Activities as simple as taking a walk, stretching, and deep breathing can help relieve stress.

• Limit your consumption of news. We live in a society where the news is available to us 24 hours a day via television, radio, and the Internet. The constant replay of news stories about a disaster or traumatic event can increase stress and anxiety and make some people relive the event over and over. Reduce the amount of news you watch and/or listen to, and engage in relaxing activities to help you heal and move on.

• Get enough “good” sleep. Some people have difficulty falling asleep after a disaster, or wake up throughout the night. If you have trouble sleeping, only go to bed when you are ready to sleep, avoid using cell phones or laptops in bed, and avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol at least one hour before going to bed. If you wake up and can’t fall back to sleep, try writing what’s on your mind in a journal or on a sheet of paper.

• Establish and maintain a routine. Try to eat meals at regular times and put yourself on a sleep schedule to ensure an adequate amount of rest. Include a positive or fun activity in your schedule that you can look forward to each day or week. Schedule exercise into your daily routine as well, if possible.

• Avoid making major life decisions. Doing things like switching jobs or careers can already be stressful and are even harder to adjust to directly after a disaster.

• Understand there will be changes. Disasters can destroy homes, schools, and places of business and worship and can disrupt the lives of people living in affected areas for a long time. Sometimes, people lose loved ones or experience injuries, both physical and mental, that may last a lifetime. Some people may also experience a temporary or permanent loss of employment. For children, attending a new or temporary school may result in being separated from peers, or after-school activities may be disrupted.

Full article found at https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/coping-tips
How to Set and Keep Wellbeing Intentions in the New Year

No matter who you are or what your background is, you’d be hard-pressed to find someone who doesn’t appreciate a fresh start. A reset. A clean slate. And even though the new year is a great time to set resolutions that support your mental wellbeing, it can also be challenging to follow through. External triggers, unforeseen events and old habits throw constant curveballs that can derail the best intentions.

There are tons of products and services available that can help make achieving wellness goals a reality, such as gym memberships, meal delivery services and counseling.

Setting resolutions that support mental wellbeing, which includes your thoughts, feelings and actions, can have a positive ripple effect on everyday life. Whether your resolutions focus on the physical, like working out more, or emotional, such as setting boundaries, it helps to have a game plan. Here are some tips to help you keep your wellbeing intentions throughout the year.

Adjust Your Attitude

First and foremost, try your best to approach goals with a positive attitude. A 2022 study explained how attitude plays a role in developing new habits. It stressed how habits are more likely to be developed by people who practice meditation and mindfulness, because it not only reduces anxiety, depression and stress, it also increases self-compassion and psychological wellbeing.

Evaluate Old Goals

Reflecting on previous goals can offer valuable insight as you come up with a new list of resolutions. Ask yourself questions such as

What challenges did I face?
Did I have control over those challenges?
What similarities and/or differences do previous goals have with my new ones?

Answering these questions ahead of time can help you avoid repeating old habits.

Anticipate Challenges with a Plan

Evidence shows that it is tremendously helpful to create an action plan for how you will reach your goals and respond to stressful and awkward situations that could throw you off track. In short, if X happens, I will do Y. For example, if your goal is not to drink alcohol, have a rehearsed response ready should you be offered an alcoholic drink at a party, such as “No, thank you. But I will take a water.”

Brainstorming scenarios and your desired response prepares you to respond intentionally, rather than reverting to old habits.

Get Rested

Have you noticed how everything seems harder when you’re tired? Rest is proven to enhance decision making, improve productivity and heal your body. Combined, you will be able to make choices that improve your mental wellbeing.

Full article found at https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2022/12/wellbeing-intentions-new-year/