

# Guidelines for Alcohol & Medication Use After a Disaster

It is common to think that using alcohol/drugs or increasing use of medication following a disaster will help you cope better with stress. However, overuse of alcohol, drugs and even medications can make things worse by interrupting sleep cycles, increasing the risk of health problems, and creating potential dependence on the substance. *(Adapted from: Safety, Function, Action and Psychological First Aid Field Operations Guide 2nd Edition, <http://www.samhsa.gov>)*

Here are some suggestions for managing your use of alcohol and drugs:

- 1 Pay attention to any change in your use of alcohol and/or drugs.
- 2 Consult with a healthcare professional about safe ways to reduce feelings of stress.
- 3 Use prescription and over-the-counter medications as indicated on the label.
- 4 Eat well, exercise, get enough sleep, and use your family and others for support.
- 5 If you believe you have a problem with substances, speak to a professional.
- 6 If you feel like using larger amounts of either prescribed or over-the-counter medications, consult a healthcare professional.
- 7 If you have successfully stopped drinking or using drugs, experiencing a disaster can result in strong urges to drink or use again. It is important to seek support to strengthen your recovery.

**Nebraska Strong: Disaster Recovery Project**

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