

# Community Healing

Quick Reference



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01

# Purpose of This Kit





The *Community Healing Quick Reference* offers simple, practical tools that anyone can use to support emotional steadiness after crisis. It is designed to help neighbors, families, and community leaders respond with calm, compassion, and confidence—so healing can begin right where people are.



02

# Who This Is For



This guide is for anyone supporting others after a crisis, neighbors, community leaders, volunteers, teachers, faith-based helpers, first responders, and family members. It's built for everyday people who want simple, steady tools to bring comfort, calm, and connection to their community.



03

# What to Know





In times of stress or disaster, people cope in many different ways. There is no “right” reaction. What matters most is creating safety, listening without judgment, and offering steady, simple support. Small actions—calm breathing, checking in, sharing space—can make a meaningful difference as individuals and communities begin to recover.” Replace with “Small actions; calm breathing, checking in and sharing space can make a meaningful difference as individuals and communities begin to recover.

### Key points:

Strong emotions after a crisis are **normal**. Fear, sadness, anger, exhaustion, and uncertainty are common responses to overwhelming experiences. **Healing happens best in connection.**



04

# Quick Grounding Tools



**Use anytime your emotions feel intense:**

**5-4-3-2-1 Grounding**



Take a slow breath in... and out.

- 5 – Notice **five things you can see** around you.
- 4 – Notice **four things you can touch** (your clothes, your chair, the floor).
- 3 – Notice **three things you can hear**—near or far.
- 2 – Notice **two things you can smell** or that have a familiar scent.
- 1 – Notice **one thing you can taste** or the feeling in your mouth.

End with one steady breath.

Feel yourself right here, present and supported.



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# Community Breathing



Invite everyone to sit or stand in a comfortable way.  
Take a slow breath in together... and exhale gently.

On the next breath, imagine the whole group breathing as one—  
in... and out... like a calm wave moving through the room.

Inhale for a count of **4**...  
Hold for 1...  
Exhale for **5**.

Repeat this rhythm 3–4 times, letting the pace stay soft and easy.

As you breathe, notice the quiet support of the people around you—  
no one fixing anything, just sharing steady breaths.

End with one slow inhale...  
and a long, relaxing exhale,  
grounded in community and calm





06

# Hand on Heart Reset





Place one hand gently over your heart.  
Feel the warmth of your own touch.

Take a slow breath in... and a soft breath out.  
Let your hand rise and fall with each breath.

Say quietly to yourself (in your mind or whispering):  
**“I am here. I am safe enough in this moment.”**

Stay for 2–3 breaths, letting the steady rhythm of your heartbeat remind you that your body is still with you, still trying to protect you.

When ready, lower your hand and take one final calming breath.



# 07 Gentle Movement



Take a slow breath in... and out.

Begin by softly rolling your shoulders up... back... and down.  
No rush—just easing a little space into the body.

Gently stretch your arms out or up, only as far as feels comfortable.  
Let them come back down.

Slowly turn your head left... then right... noticing any release.  
Shake out your hands or feet lightly if that feels good.

End with one more slow breath, letting your body settle into a calmer rhythm.



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# Body Scan







Take a slow breath in... and let it out.  
Let your shoulders soften just a little.

Bring your attention to the **top of your head**.  
Notice any tightness... or ease. No need to change anything—just notice.

Move your attention to your **face**—your eyes, jaw, and mouth.  
If you can, let your jaw loosen, like a small sigh.

Bring your awareness down to your **neck and shoulders**.  
Imagine them gently lowering, even a few millimeters.

Shift your focus to your **chest and breathing**.  
Feel the rise... and fall.  
Let your breath move at its own comfortable pace.

Notice your **arms and hands**.  
Are they warm? Cool? Heavy? Light?

Move to your **belly**—softening the area if that feels okay.  
Let it expand naturally with your breath.

Bring attention to your **back**—upper, middle, lower.  
Notice any spots holding tension.  
Imagine sending a little warmth there.

Move to your **hips and legs**.  
Feel the support beneath you.

Finally, notice your **feet**—the weight, the warmth, the contact with the ground.

Take one more slow breath.  
And when you're ready... gently lift your gaze or return to the room.



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# Talking & Listening for Healing





Healing conversations don't require perfect words—just presence. Invite people to speak at their own pace, sharing only what feels safe.

When listening, focus on *understanding*, not fixing. Stay grounded, keep your tone soft, and allow pauses. Simple responses like “*I hear you,*” “*That sounds really hard,*” or “*Thank you for sharing*” help people feel seen.

Avoid minimizing: examples of unhelpful statements “*Just stay positive.*” “*It could be worse.*”

Remember: healing grows in spaces where people feel respected, not rushed.

Your calm presence is often more powerful than any advice.



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# Family & Neighbor Support







After a crisis, simple acts of care from family and neighbors make a real difference.

Check in on each other—share a meal, watch the children, help with small tasks, or just sit together for a few minutes.

Let people know they're not facing this alone.

Offer support without judgment, and ask gently, *"What would help you today?"*

Community strength grows when we show up for one another in consistent, kind, everyday ways.

**Remember to:**

- Check in regularly with elders and vulnerable neighbors

- Share meals, rides, childcare, errands

- **Keep simple daily routines** for children

- Reduce isolation through calls, visits, and shared time

- Ask before helping—**respect dignity and choice**



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# Daily Community Coping Tools





Small daily practices help communities stay steady during long recovery. Take a moment each day to breathe together, check on someone, or share a word of encouragement.

Build simple routines—morning stretching, evening walks, shared meals, or a quick neighbor check-in.

These everyday actions create safety, connection, and emotional balance.

Healing grows when communities practice calm, kindness, and consistency—one day at a time.



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# Crisis & Referral Guidance







If someone is overwhelmed, unsafe, or showing signs of crisis, stay calm and stay with them.

Listen without pressure, keep your voice steady, and move them to a quieter, safer space if possible.

Encourage immediate help from a trusted professional, clinic, or emergency service.

If there is risk of harm to self or others, **do not leave the person alone**—seek urgent support right away.

Remind them that reaching out is a strength, not a failure.

Your steady presence, paired with timely referral, can help keep someone safe.





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# Reflection & Collective Hope





Take a quiet moment to notice what has carried you and your community through the hardest days—kindness, resilience, shared strength, or simple acts of care.

Invite people to reflect on one thing they are grateful for today, and one small hope they hold for tomorrow.

When these hopes are spoken aloud in community, they become seeds for rebuilding.

Collective hope grows when we remember that we do not heal alone—we heal together, step by step.



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# Key Message



In every community, healing begins with connection.

Small acts of care—listening, checking in, sharing support—help people feel seen, safe, and less alone.

Recovery takes time, but no one has to walk it by themselves.

When we show up for one another with steadiness and compassion, hope becomes possible again.

### Remember

You do not have to heal alone.

**Small, steady steps, taken together, build a powerful recovery.**