



Climate
Mental Health
Network



**Extreme Weather
Survivors**

A Guide to Supporting Kids Using the Climate Emotions Wheel and Other Tips





Climate
Mental Health
Network

Guide created by Extreme Weather Survivors

Learn more about their work at extremeweathersurvivors.org.

Download the Climate Emotions Wheel at climatementalhealth.net/wheel

These resources are not a replacement for professional mental health services, when needed. In the United States, text or call 988 for a 24/7 crisis hotline. For emergency mental health numbers outside of the US, visit findahelpline.com



Climate Emotions Wheel



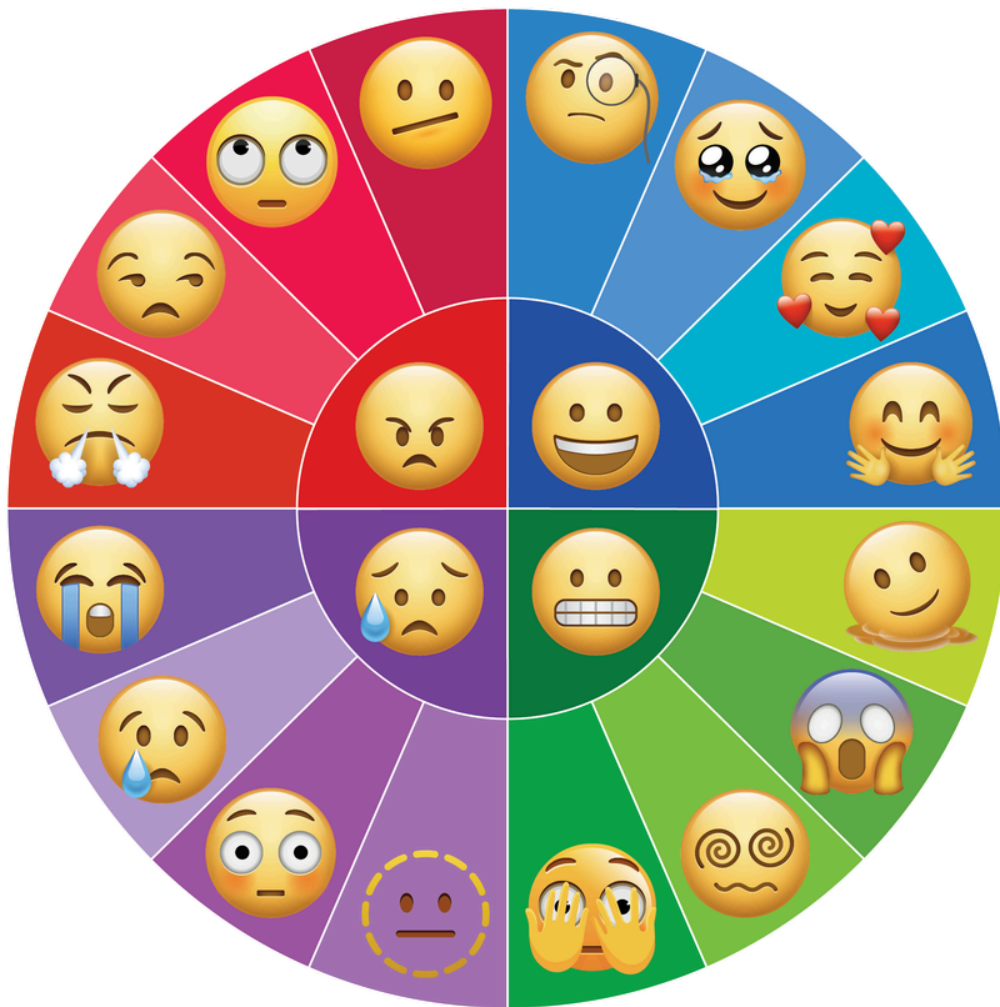
Climate Emotions Wheel © 2024





Climate
Mental Health
Network

Climate Emotions Wheel



Climate Emotions Wheel © 2024



Climate
Mental Health
Network

ClimateMentalHealth.Net



Using the Climate Emotions Wheel for Conversations with Kids

Anxiety

- 1. Validate:** “Name it, to tame it”. You can say: “It sounds like you’re really anxious about your future. I can understand why you worry when you see these images/the news”.
- 2. Acknowledge the fear:** You don’t have to just say “It’ll be OK.” Try answering their questions as honestly as possible, saying something along the lines of: “I don’t have all the answers. I can’t see into the future, but I’m here with you. You are not alone.”
- 3. Focus on shared values:** The most important thing is being there for one another. Consider making digital copies or creating a list of things that are important for your kids to take with them in case of an evacuation.
- 4. Model resilience:** It’s okay to say, “I don’t know,” or, “This is hard for me too.” Showing children how we navigate difficult emotions teaches them that we can face challenges without losing hope.

Sadness

- 1. Encourage open communication:** You can say things like: “Do you have any questions for me?” “I am here to listen.”
- 2. Use art to express emotions:** You might try drawing a picture together, of a memory, a place, or a feeling. You could also encourage your kids to sing a song or write a poem about how they’re feeling.
- 3. Create a memory box:** Collect pictures, mementos, and meaningful objects related to what’s been lost. This can help children feel a sense of connection to the experience they’re grieving.
- 4. Model the importance of leaning on community:** Use stories in the news or that happened in your community to talk about how we’re never alone, and communities can pull together and help one another—inside extreme weather and out of it, too.

Anger

1. Listen and acknowledge their feelings: Make it clear to your child that you're here to listen to them, and it makes sense that they're feeling anger after experiencing (or in anticipation of) extreme weather.

2. Suggest physical outlets to get their energy out: You might encourage them to put on loud music and dance, journal, create art or a video making, or engage in physical activity, like going for a run.

3. Help them find balance: Ensure your kids have balance and breaks in their lives, with activities they enjoy, and funny books and movies that help distract them when they need it.

4. Provide connections to action: Encourage your kids to get involved with an advocacy group at school or take them to a safe, nonviolent march or protest. They can write letters or make phone calls to elected officials, voicing their concerns around increasing extreme weather and disaster preparedness. Feel free to reach out to extremeweathersurvivors.org for advocacy opportunities.



Preparing, During and After Extreme Weather Events

Videos at climatementalhealth.net/extreme-weather

Preparedness Day

You can help soothe your child's anxiety (and your own!) around extreme weather by having a dedicated preparedness day once or twice a year.

Here are some ways you might prepare:

1. Pack a go-bag and involve your children in packing their own go-bags.
 - You might also make digital copies of the things that are important to them that they may not be able to take with them in case of an evacuation.
2. Restock non-perishable foods, with enough calories for everyone in the household for 10 days.
3. Update your emergency contact list, and reach out to friends and family out of your area who are willing to host your family in case of an evacuation.
4. Ensure you have the best emergency notification apps and are signed up for regional emergency alerts.

The Importance of Community

Community is key. Use stories in the news or that happened in your community to talk about important things, like how communities can pull together and help one another. Communities come together after a disaster to share food, a place to stay, and to clean up together. Show your kids how to build community, even when there isn't a disaster. We're stronger together.



Preparing, During and After Extreme Weather Events

Videos at climatementalhealth.net/extreme-weather

How to Maintain a Sense of Normalcy after Extreme Weather

Prioritize recreating “normal” routines in a very abnormal existence in the months following the event, like:

- Cooking dinner together
- Playing our favorite games
- Meeting up frequently with neighbors
- Doing our favorite activities together as a family
- Advice from Erica, a Marshall Fire Survivor: We modeled daily that one very scary experience would not take away our family’s joy.

The Importance of Sharing Your Story

Nobody chooses to be an extreme weather survivor, but the good news is, you’re not alone. We know that healing happens together, and there’s a whole community of us who have been through it and are figuring it out day by day. Join us by sharing your story, and know you don’t have to do this by yourself. [Click here to share your story and get connected with the Extreme Weather Survivors community.](https://www.extremeweathersurvivors.org/share-your-story) <https://www.extremeweathersurvivors.org/share-your-story>