

Your mind – including your thoughts, feelings and outlook on life - is your most fundamental and important survival tool. It's the one thing you can be sure you'll have with you, no matter what. Here's what you need to know to be mentally prepared:

- **You've already taken the first step toward mental preparedness.** People who have actually thought about what a disaster could be like are more likely to survive than people who haven't, even if they haven't made other preparations.
- **Confusion often happens after a disaster.** People can go into a mild state of shock as their body tries to adjust to a major disruption. The best antidote to stress is to **breathe** – slow and deep breathing gets oxygen back to the brain. Knowing this will help you help others, once you have secured your own safety.
- **If you have made plans for what to do** during and immediately after a disaster, **you'll be able to cope that much more easily.** You'll feel secure knowing that you're ready, and you'll be able to focus on the situation at hand.
- **Physical practice helps.** Physically practice **Drop, Cover and Hold** and the other plans you and your household make in getting prepared. Aided by muscle memory, you will react more quickly and safely without having to think through what to do.
- **Understand that disasters often bring out the best in people.** Records of disasters show that most people respond with care and compassion toward others and show courage and presence of mind.
- **In a disaster, just stay alert to what's happening** and re-evaluate your plans as you go along.

You and the people nearby will be each other's main support. This is why knowing your neighbors is so important. The **Get Prepared with Your Neighbors** and **Get Organized** parts of PREP will help you make or strengthen those connections, and will help you all make plans such as deciding on a neighborhood gathering area so you can find each other easily after a disaster.

So take heart - you're partway there already!