



Survivor to Survivor: Strategies to Heal and Deal

Contributors:

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About United Policyholders

- 501(c)3 non profit organization.
Tax ID # 94-3162024
- A voice and an information resource for consumers in all 50 states.
- A 25+ year track-record and subject matter expertise in insurance and disaster recovery
- Not for profit...not for sale.
- Funded by donations and grants.
- A volunteer corps with personal and/or professional expertise in disaster recovery and insurance.

My home after the 1991 Oakland Fire



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One week after the fire



Easter Egg Hunt, 1992



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BE KIND TO YOURSELF

- It's been a
(add your own descriptor here)
of a few months!
 - Be as gentle/forgiving/kind to yourself as you can possibly be

For those of you navigating solo...

- Know that although you travel your path alone, there are people all around who are willing to help.
- Greet each day with gratitude: for life, for sunshine, for rain, for family, for friends.
- Find good support:
 - Church/synagogue/other community/other singles
 - A financial advisor, a lawyer, therapist
 - Even your insurance support group!
- Take care of your body
 - Eat healthy food; keep your digestive track in working order
 - Bathe and shampoo frequently – water is a powerful healer
 - Get a massage every once in a while – the power of touch is formidable!

For those in relationships...

- People process loss/trauma in different ways.
- Don't let the fire destroy your relationships, in addition to your home
- Responses to stress may change your normal role - I became calm and my husband became frenzied.

Don't Forget Your Children



“Whatever is on the outside can be taken away at any time. Only what is inside you is safe...”

- Give lots of hugs – you’ll get them back in spades – and greet everyone with a smile: “Be kind, for everyone you meet is carrying a burden. Everybody grieves.”
- Listen to soothing music.
- Lose yourself now and then in a good book; do not get caught up in the news.
- Remember that you are not alone, even though it feels that way frequently.

Connecting With Other Fire Survivors Can Be Helpful

- It can be hard for non-fire survivors to fully grasp the difficulty of navigating a catastrophic property loss or how you're feeling
- Non-survivor family and friends may offer help - but don't know how

This is Now Your “New Normal”

- Your loss and the recovery is now a major part of your life.
- Goal is to incorporate this into your life and your family’s legacy.
- Make a “new normal” for you and your family.

Strategies to Survive

- Learn to ask for help – ouch! You will have a chance to pay it forward
- Connect with others in the same situation - your insurance support group can provide all kinds of support
- Allow yourself to have a pitty party once in a while – its ok – but keep moving forward
- Find humor in the daily stuff

Strategies to survive

- Journaling
- Exercising
- Gratitude
- Helping Others
- Meditation
- Counseling
- Art

Past & Future Garden Quilt



Art from Salvaged Copper

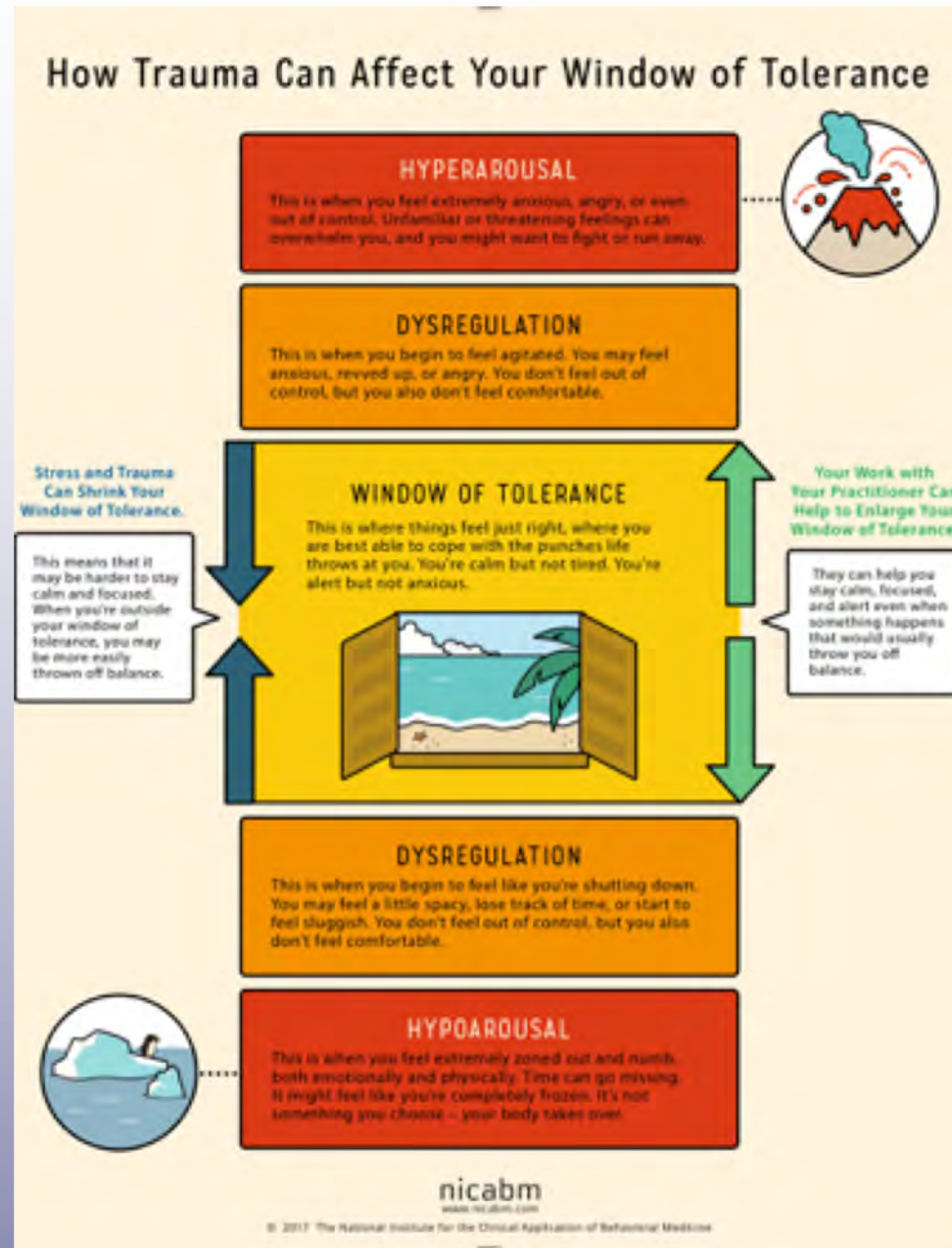


Art by James Servais

Seek professional help...

- This is NOT the time to “tough it out” if you’re suffering from depression or anxiety-related symptoms
- Don’t shy away from seeking professional help...it can make all the difference
- Individual therapy and/or couple’s counseling
- You may need it now – or a year after the fire – keep the resource on the table

Gail Van Buuren, LMFT



Celebrate along the way!!!

- This is a LONG process
- Make new memories
- Celebrating your victories along the way will give you the emotional strength to keep on going.

2 Years Stronger Together

NEIGHBORHOOD COOKOUT!

A Collaboration of:

*Coffey Strong, Larkfield Resilience Fund,
Mark West, & Wikiup Communities*

Sunday, October 6th

12pm-5pm

Luther Burbank Center For The Arts
50 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa

LIVE MUSIC FREE FOOD

FUN KID ACTIVITIES

Bring Your Picnic Blanket!!

Please RSVP at: <https://2strongertogether.eventbrite.com>
or call Jenny at: 707-322-5112

Fire families have celebrated with groundbreaking parties...



Fire families have celebrated with framing or “stud” parties...





PEACE BE WITH
THIS HOUSE AND
WITH ALL WHO
LIVE HERE.

NANIT

Bill

KISNER

9/21/

2008

A
women's place
is in the bath tub

May you have walls for the wind,
And a roof for the rain, and drinks
beside the fire, laughter to cheer you
And those you love near you, and all
that your heart may desire.

Celtic Blessing

Rachel

Family

www.uphelp.org/SurvivorsSpeak

- Andi O'Connor (CO Fire Survivor) – TED Talk
- Rene Van Heel – (2007 San Diego Fire Survivor) Choosing to Make Lemonade Out of Lemons
- Robyn Walery – (2007 Fire Survivor) Observations from a Teenage Wildfire Survivor
- Working with your Contractor
- Coping with Underinsurance
- Reforming Homeowners Insurance

For More Information:

Visit UP's website and search for more claim tips, articles and helpful info

www.uphelp.org

Take the Roadmap to Recovery Survey

www.uphelp.org/survey