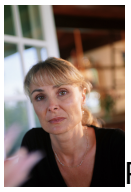 Psychologists warn the mental health effects of Hurricane Sandy could be powerful, HealthDay reports.

"Sandy, like all natural disasters, is considered a criterion 'A1? stressor in the diagnoses of acute stress disorder in the first month after the event and post-traumatic stress disorder, at least a month after the event," said Simon Rego, Director of Psychology Training at Montefiore Medical Center/Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City.

"I'd expect many people to display symptoms of acute stress disorder even if they did not directly experience effects of Sandy."

The symptoms could include insomnia, irritability, feeling numb or detached from others, restlessness, or feeling in a daze, Rego noted. Some people closest to the destruction could experience flashbacks, while others may avoid people or places that remind them of the event.

Many of these effects are likely to be temporary, Rego added. "Fortunately, people are quite resilient and for many of these people, the symptoms will begin to abate on their own over time, as long as they have a healthy support system that enables them to talk about what happened and how they feel about it and do their best to return to as close to as normal routine as they can manage, under the circumstances," he said.

Children affected by the storm need reassurance from their parents, according to Sara Rivero-Conil, a child psychologist at Miami Children's Hospital. "Tell them they needn't worry, there is a plan in place and these events don't happen every day," she said. Even watching the hurricane and its aftermath on television can be stressful for children, Rivero-Conil added.

Alcoholism and drug dependence are complex problems, with many related issues. And, although there is no magic formula to help someone stop his or her drinking or drug use, you are not alone. NCADD can help. Click here to learn how.