

Natural Disasters Bring Married Couples Closer, at Least for Awhile

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That's according to a first-of-its-kind study that looked at couples in the Houston area before and after Hurricane Harvey.

The study, published in the journal [Psychological Science](#), has implications for how best to help families as they navigate different types of stressors.

Researchers had already surveyed 231 newly married [couples](#) about their relationship satisfaction shortly before Hurricane Harvey hit the Texas coast in August 2017, devastating much of the Houston area.

With the advent of the hurricane, researchers saw a unique opportunity to track relationship dynamics through the aftermath of a natural disaster. A relationship study with data from before and after a natural disaster had not been done before.

"We originally set out to study the effects of everyday stressors, such as financial problems and the transition to parenthood, on couples in the early years of their marriage," says lead author Hannah Williamson, assistant professor of human development and family sciences at the University of Texas at Austin.

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