

Mental Health Recovery Program

Enhancing the mental wellbeing of individuals, families, carers and community members impacted by the 2019 bushfires.

Supporting the psychological capability of our community to respond to disasters



Mental health and disasters

It is common and normal to experience a range of emotions following a disaster.

Some people experience distress after a disaster that resolves over time with the help of their existing coping strategies and social support. For others, this distress may continue and cause ongoing problems for a person's wellbeing.

Pre-existing mental health conditions; a history of experiencing trauma, and social isolation are some of the factors that may make a person more vulnerable to experience these mental health problems.

Additional support is available to assist with the recovery and mental wellbeing of those affected by the 2019 bushfires.

While everyone reacts differently to a disaster, some common reactions include:

Emotional: Fear, panic, anxiety, feeling numb, anger, irritability, grief, helplessness, depression.

Physical: Changes to sleep, appetite and/or weight, increased fatigue, unexplained physical ailments (e.g., headaches, increased pain).

Cognitive: Confusion, forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, thoughts being pre-occupied with the event, constant worry

Social: Changes to how you usually interact with others; avoiding people, withdrawing in social situations, increased relationship difficulties.

Behavioural: Not attending to your usual self-care, increased alcohol and other drug use, increased gambling or engagement in activities that would typically be problematic for you.

We are here to help

We are here to help reduce the psychological distress and symptoms that may be experienced by individuals, carers and their families who have been affected by the 2019 bushfires.

We also aim to increase the psychological preparedness of our community to respond to a disaster. This will be achieved by working with government and community agencies, stakeholders and first responders, schools, and primary healthcare providers who have been affected by the bushfires to support their mental wellbeing and psychological capability to respond to disasters.

We provide

- » referral pathways to access specialised mental health care
- » consultation liaison around assessing and responding to psychological distress following a disaster event
- » training for individuals, groups and teams
- » assistance with linkages to relevant support services.



Tips for supporting your mental wellbeing

- » share how you feel with those that you are comfortable with
- » accept support from family, friends, community
- » get back into a routine
- » care for your physical health by exercising and eating healthy meals
- » get adequate sleep
- » consider if alcohol and other illicit drugs is helping your mental wellbeing
- » make time to relax and see friends and family
- » talk with your doctor or other healthcare professionals if needed.

We care about you

Being psychologically prepared

Being psychologically prepared for a disaster can help with our ability to recover and overcome the emotional impacts of future disasters.

Building on your existing coping strategies, resources and social supports is one way we can increase our psychological capability to recover from disasters and adversity.

Contact us

Phone: **0439 554 149**

SCHHS_MHDisasterRecovery@health.qld.gov.au

Remember, in times of crisis you can contact
1300 MH CALL (1300 64 22 55) for 24-hour specialist mental health care.

Proudly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).



Australian Government



Queensland Government

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