

# Managing Mental Health After a Natural Disaster

The natural world can be unpredictable. A natural disaster or extreme weather event can result in a sense of fear and uncertainty about immediate safety and threaten the sense of predictability to life. Difficulties adjusting to the aftermath of a natural disaster can be experienced long-term, even once the immediate danger has passed. Individuals who have faced a natural disaster might be coping with widespread feelings of loss – loss of housing, possessions, employment, study, the environment and even loss of life. This can further threaten our sense of predictability, security or stability.

eMHPrac has compiled a list of resources on preventing and managing mental health issues after a natural disaster such as a bushfire, earthquake, extreme storm, cyclone, drought or flood. Digital interventions offer affordable and accessible mental health information, tools and treatments to support your mental health during and after a natural disaster.

Scan to download a free  
PDF version from the  
eMHPrac Website



## Phone Services



### headspace

Guidance and support for young people who need help with mental health, physical health, or alcohol and other drugs. Information for young people affected by a natural disaster.  
1800 650 890 (9am-1pm, 7 days a week)  
<https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/for-young-people/natural-disasters>

### Kids Helpline

Free, confidential 24hr counselling service for young people aged 5-25yrs, offering support by phone, email and over the web. Information for teens and young adults on coping with natural disasters.  
1800 55 1800  
<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-natural-disasters>

### Lifeline

Toolkits on coping with trauma, recovery after natural disaster, getting through bushfire, drought and extreme climate events.  
13 11 14  
Bushfire Recovery line: 13 43 57  
<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/information-and-support/natural-disaster/>



### Beyond Blue

Telephone, online and email counselling and website on natural disasters and your mental health. Includes common reactions, when to seek further support, dealing with the emotional impacts, and supporting someone else through a natural disaster.  
1800 224 636  
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/natural-disasters-and-your-mental-health>

### ParentLine

Telephone and online counselling for parents and carers with information on coping with a crisis or disaster. Outlines normal behavioural responses and ways to support a child.  
<https://parentline.com.au/issues/coping-crisis-or-disasters>



### Griefline

Phone and online counselling services and moderated forums for individuals and families who are experiencing loss and grief.  
1300 845 307  
<https://griefline.org.au>

## Digital Mental Health Gateway

### Head to Health

#### Head to Health

A website that links Australians to online and phone mental health services, information and resources.  
[headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)



#### Be You

Information for education on the impact of natural disasters on mental health, coping strategies, signs of distress to look for in children and young people, and being prepared for natural disasters.  
<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/grief-trauma-and-critical-incidents/impact-of-natural-disasters-on-mental-health>

## Information Sites



#### Trauma and Grief Network

Virtual space for caregivers to understand and respond to the needs of children and adolescents experiencing trauma, loss, and grief, including disasters. Resources include tip sheets, videos, and links to other support resources.  
<https://tgn.anu.edu.au/resource/disasters/>



#### Transcultural Mental Health Centre

Factsheets on coping personally with natural and war-related disasters and helping your family.  
<https://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/transcultural-mental-health-centre-tmhc/resources/multilingual-resources-by-title/coping-personally-with-war-and-disaster/coping-personally-with-war>



#### Australian Psychological Society

Resources for health professionals and consumers on mental health issues, including downloadable Psychological First Aid guide for people affected by disaster.  
<https://psychology.org.au/getmedia/c1846704-2fa3-41ae-bf53-7a7451af6246/red-cross-psychological-first-aid-disasters.pdf>



#### Way Ahead

Website with information on mental health and natural disasters, listing common reactions, when and where to seek help, strategies to cope and ways to support others.  
<https://wayahead.org.au/get-the-facts/mental-health-after-natural-disasters-and-emergencies/>



#### Emerging Minds

Community Trauma Toolkit helping communities, families, and children understand the impacts of a traumatic event and how to lessen them.  
<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/toolkits/community-trauma-toolkit/>

## Online Programs

#### ifarmwell

Free online toolkit designed to help farmers cope effectively with life's challenges and reduce the negative impact that stressful situations have on their lives.  
<https://ifarmwell.com.au/>



#### You Got This Mate

Tips and information to assist rural men to reach their best mental health. Includes quizzes, resources on supporting others and online action plan tool.  
<https://youtothismate.com.au/>



#### Black Dog Institute Bushfire Support Service

Free quick mental health check, providing insights and recommendations to support Emergency Service Workers and their loved ones.  
<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/bush-fire-support-service/>



#### Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health

A range of information, factsheets and other self-help resources for those affected by trauma or wanting to assist others who have been affected by trauma, including natural disasters.  
<https://www.phoenixaustralia.org/>



#### Birdie's Tree (Children's Health QLD)

Suite of resources to help parents, carers, and young children prepare for, cope with and recover from natural disasters. Lists therapeutic games, storybooks, and early childhood curriculum.  
<https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/natural-disaster-recovery/>



#### Open Arms

Information on resilience and recovery from natural disasters including; ways to stay connected, maintaining your health, building in time for activities you enjoy, balancing media exposure, maintain or re-establish routines, practice kindness and support others, dealing with triggering events and practicing relaxation.  
<https://www.openarms.gov.au/about/news/2021/resilience-and-recovery-natural-disaster>



#### MindSpot Clinic

Online courses for a range of issues. Includes assessment, feedback, and therapist support.  
<https://www.mindspot.org.au>



#### THIS WAY UP

Online, self-guided CBT program for a range of mental health conditions and wellbeing issues. Own clinician assisted option available.  
<http://www.thiswayup.org.au/programs/>



#### ReachOut

Information, peer-support and referral tools for young people and parents on natural disasters and drought. Tips on what to do for the initial days and weeks, things you can do to feel better, how to get help, and tips for the longer term after a natural disaster.  
<https://au.reachout.com/articles/how-to-deal-with-the-stress-of-bushfires-floods-earthquakes-and-cyclones>



#### Mental Health Online

Online programs for a range of issues, with self-guided or therapist support options.  
<http://www.mentalhealthonline.org.au/>