



# About the bushfires resource pack for educators

Be You has developed a resource pack to help schools and early learning services respond to the mental health impact from the bushfire crisis in Australia.

The pack of resources from across the Australian mental health sector will enable you to quickly find information and support that's relevant to you and the children or young people in your care. The resources are divided into three sections: **immediate, short-term and longer-term**, acknowledging that mental health recovery from these bushfires may take some time and will be different for everyone.

## Overview for educators

- There will be a range of experiences within your class or room. Make sure you understand your early learning service or school's plan for finding out **whether families were directly or indirectly affected by the bushfire**.
- Remember it's the child or young person's perception that's important. They may have never been in danger from the fires, but the crisis may have still affected their mental health.
- Where possible, **establish or return to your routine as quickly as you can**. Routine can help children and young people feel safe when many other parts of their life might seem uncertain or out of their control.
- Encourage children and young people to **think about and do things they enjoy**. Talk about how it's important to still do activities we like and stay connected with our friends, because it's important for our mental health.
- If you're talking about media coverage of the bushfires, **try to focus on the positive stories**. Talk about the volunteers, communities coming together, donations from across the world and how you can contribute for example, through a food drive. For more information visit: [Talking to kids about scary stuff in the news](#) on Beyond Blue's YouTube channel.
- If you don't already, **get to know your school or early learning service's wellbeing response plan** so you know what to do if a child or young person is in distress.
- **Pay extra attention to any changes in the behaviour** of children or young people in your school or early learning service. It may be helpful to talk with colleagues or families in consultation with leadership if you're unsure if you're witnessing a change in behaviour. Find

out about the [Trauma signs to look for](#) on the Be You website. Keep in mind that these changes could take weeks, months or years to develop and the recovery time will also vary.

- Take extra care to **notice and listen to children and young people during this time**. This will give them the opportunity to explore their emotions and reach out for help.
- **If you think a child or young person in your care needs extra support**, consult with the relevant leader at your school or early learning service.
- **Make time to look after yourself** so that you're in a better position to provide support to those around you. Try to maintain your routines, know your limits, debrief with trusted colleagues, family or friends and try to do things you enjoy.

## Overview for education leaders

- Use your existing communication channels with parents to **find out whether any of the children or young people in your care need extra support** as a result of the bushfires. Being affected could range from family losing property, to being on holiday in a fire-affected area, to feeling particularly upset about media coverage of the bushfires.
- **Remind your team of your wellbeing response plan** so they know what to do if a child or young person is in distress or wants to talk about how they're feeling.
- Make sure your team knows about any other **relevant policies or procedures**, for example on what to do if you think a child or young person needs mental health support.

You can access the bushfires resource pack at [beyou.edu.au/bushfires-response](https://beyou.edu.au/bushfires-response)