



Educator wellbeing after a natural disaster

Looking after yourself in the event of a natural disaster is the first step to providing support to those around you.

Your wellbeing comes first

When a natural disaster occurs, communities are impacted in a variety of ways.

Early learning services and schools are a significant part of any community and are therefore placed in a position to demonstrate responsiveness – not only once these events occur but also in preparation for such events.

Learn more about [providing support to children and young people after a natural disaster](#).

Natural disasters can [impact both individuals and communities](#) in many ways. As an educator, supporting children and young people within your learning community will be vital for their recovery after experiencing these traumatic events. To provide this support, it's also important for educators to look after themselves and each other alongside caring for children and young people.

Balance your responsibilities and your own mental health

In your role as an educator, you'll be faced with many challenges following a natural disaster, including trying to support children and young people in your learning community as well as managing your own response to the event. It can be difficult to continue your day-to-day role, trying to provide a safe, secure environment for children and young people while also managing your own wellbeing.

Tips for self-care

Taking the time to look after yourself means you'll be in better position to provide support to those around you. Here are some tips for looking after yourself:

- Maintain routines that work for you – eat well and sleep well. Your physical health impacts your emotional health.

- Know who your supports are and spend time with them – this might be friends, family or someone else at work.
- Know your limits – supporting others can be tough, so know when to step back.
- Debrief with others at work – this can be informal or formal.
- Link with supports outside of the learning environment.

Learn more about [Staff wellbeing](#) and [Stress management](#).

Long-term considerations

Natural disasters can be traumatic and have long-term impacts for some people.

Recovery is different for everyone and certain events can cause distress, long after the event. Being aware of these triggers can help you to be better prepared. Some common events which may bring up feelings of distress for you, or others, can include:

- people in your family or learning community talking about the event
- anniversary dates
- funerals
- memorial days
- birthdays.

Other triggers which may be more individual can be harder to plan for. For some people, hearing sirens, fire alarms and experiencing smells which are associated with the event can trigger a response. While it isn't possible to predict if and when this might happen, being aware of your own reactions and responses will help you to get timely support. There are few things you can do to be prepared, including:

- talking about the event when it happens
- knowing how past stressful events for you may impact on your ability to cope with future events
- being aware of your own mental health and knowing what your triggers might be
- knowing what your support options are and seeking them out as early as possible.

[The Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit](#) contains resources to help and support adults and children before, during and after a disaster or traumatic event.