

STRENGTHENING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FOLLOWING DISASTERS AND MAJOR EMERGENCIES

Emergencies by their very nature are stressful and disruptive and can cause difficulties for children and families for months and even years afterwards.

About the project

This project involved the translation of evidence into practical resources that provide guidance on how to address the impacts of disasters and other major emergencies on child mental health and wellbeing, family function and positive parenting. The evidence drew from our previous research studies including Beyond Bushfires, the Strengthening School Communities study, PhD research into parenting after disasters, and the study of Long term disaster impacts on children.

Knowledge translation and impact



Influenced and consulted on a series of **5 Play School episodes** due for release in February 2021, which focus on 'everyday helpers', keeping calm and normalising reactions to crisis and disaster. They will continue to be available after airing on ABC iview website and ABC KIDS iview app.



400+
views

A new **guide to resources for children and families** to help people to navigate through materials released by multiple organisations following the 2019/2020 bushfires - <https://www.redcross.org.au/gethelp/emergencies/resources-about-disasters/resources-for-parents#recover> visited over 400 times since going live in January 2020.



20,000
copies
printed

A new guide to **parenting after disasters** which will be used in impacted communities for years to come - <https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/7cc1cce0-a6d9-41ac-a8e0-4bac2663be74/Crisis-Parents-Booklet.pdf.aspx>. The resource was **printed 20,000** times and distributed to **Red Cross offices across Australia**. It has been downloaded over 110 times since going live in May 2020.



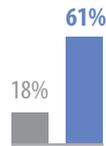
Resources tested through **webinars held with parents and carers** who had lived experience of disasters. Over **76 people attended live** and over **330 downloaded** the recorded session afterwards.

Knowledge translation and impact



20,000
copies
printed

Updated an existing Red Cross resource for children and parents after crisis which will be used in impacted communities for years to come - <https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/bc927459-bc19-4e1a-8e3c-e4178b01a0c2/CrisisChildren-Booklet.pdf.aspx>. The resource was printed 20,000 times and distributed to Red Cross offices across Australia. It has been downloaded over 250 times since going live in May 2020.



Trained 86 Red Cross volunteers – self reports of high confidence in capacity to support families increased from 18% to 61%; low confidence reduced from 26% to zero.



145
students

The resources were used to **train Social Workers** in the University of Melbourne entry-to-practice Master of Social Work course, with approximately 90 students enrolled in the subject Lifespan Risk and Resilience. It was also introduced into the Master of Advanced Social Work/Master of Health and Human Services subject, Advanced Trauma Perspectives, which had approximately 55 students enrolled. It will be an ongoing inclusion in these courses.



A group of young adults with lived experience of disaster (heavily impacted by the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires as children) were recruited to develop the **Young Views resource**. This booklet addresses the psychosocial impacts of a disaster event and provides suggested activities for youth-led workshops. The work in progress was presented to the Disaster Resilient Australian-New Zealand School Education Network (DRANSZEN) National Forum in August 2020.



The resources and recommendations were incorporated into **professional training and expert advice**, including a submission to the Royal Commission for Natural Disaster Arrangements, media interviews, a webinar to 300 members of the Independent Education Union of Australia and a series of webinars for over 200 school leaders and teachers from the NSW Teacher's Federation.

Strategic partners

This project was led by the University of Melbourne, Australian Red Cross, and Phoenix Australia: Centre of Posttraumatic Mental Health in collaboration with the University of Melbourne Children & Disasters Advisory Committee.

Funding partners

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