



# Lifeline Community Recovery

Facing the  
future together

 Lifeline

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 UnitingCare



## Loss and change in communities

Loss and change in a community following a natural disaster or critical event can be very challenging for the people directly affected. However, there are implications for other workers, businesses, industries and the community as a whole. Some people may be managing the situation. However, others may find it difficult to cope and are unsure of what the future may bring.

As an individual, you may be wondering what you can do about this situation, how you can help and what effect your contribution is going to have. We need to remember that a community is made up of individuals who, when working together, can make a difference. As individuals we bring special qualities and experiences in dealing with personal and community loss and change, which we can use to assist others.

Our challenge as individuals and a community is to ensure that we look after ourselves, our families, our friends and other people we know. People under stress are often so busy dealing with day to day life that they do not notice the physical and emotional signs that indicate they are not coping. It is important to watch out for signs of stress in ourselves and in others and access support.

For those of you who may be having some trouble coping or know someone who might be struggling, this information is a start to regaining some control over this situation.

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## **Normal emotions during loss and change**

Feelings that you can expect or may have experienced include:

<b>Anger</b>	At what has happened At whoever or whatever caused it At those trying to help At the injustice, 'Why me, Why us?'
<b>Helplessness</b>	Unable to change the situation
<b>Fear</b>	Of 'breaking down' or 'losing control' Of losing the business, farm, lifestyle Of the uncertainty
<b>Disappointment</b>	Life is turning out like this after so many years of hard work
<b>Failure</b>	Blaming yourself when it is out of control
<b>Guilt</b>	For being better or worse off than others. Regrets for things not done
<b>Shame</b>	For being exposed as helpless, 'emotional' and needing others. For not reacting as one would wish
<b>Sadness</b>	For losses of every kind
<b>Longing</b>	For all that has gone
<b>Isolation</b>	Wanting to be alone. Irritated or cannot bear the demands of being with others
<b>Numbness</b>	Feeling empty inside or a loss of all feelings
<b>Let Down</b>	A sudden loss of energy and enthusiasm
<b>Hope</b>	For the future for better times

# Reactions to stress

Loss and change can be very stressful. We all have stress in our everyday lives however in difficult times we often experience stress more frequently and with more intensity. Some symptoms of stress include:

## Physical

- Tiredness
- Headaches
- Poor sleep
- Muscle aches/stiffness
- Chest pains
- Nausea
- Weight loss/gain

## Behavioural

- Pacing
- Fidgeting
- Increased eating
- Increased smoking
- Increased drinking
- Yelling and blaming

## Psychological

- Poor concentration
- Poor memory
- Indecisiveness
- Racing thoughts
- Confusion

## Social

- Withdrawal
- Overworking
- Less contact with family and friends

## Emotional

- Mood swings
- Nervousness
- Worry
- Shame
- Frustration
- Irritability
- Anger





## Dos and Don'ts

**Do**, when you are ready and in your own time, talk with others who care for you.

**Do** share your feelings and provide support for your children to share their feelings.

**Do** try to keep the rest of your lives as normal as possible during the period of stress.

**Do** accept the support of people who care.

**Do** take time to be with your close family and friends.

**Do** express your needs clearly and honestly to family, friends and those in helping professions.

**Do** look after yourself - diet, sleep, time out.

**Do** let your children talk to you and others about their emotions.

**Do** explain to your children why expenditure will be cut back - they will cope.

**Do** try and let your family keep up with their activities as much as possible.

**Do** drive more carefully.

**Do** be more careful when working around the home.

**Do** remember - laughter is as good as a dose of medicine.

**Do** seek professional help.

**Don't** avoid talking about what is happening.

**Don't** isolate yourself from other individuals and groups.

**Don't** say bad things about yourself.

**Don't** blame authority figures - they are just doing their job.

**Don't** bottle up feelings.

**Don't** take things out on others.

**Don't** self soothe with alcohol, gambling, taking illicit drugs.



## Contact us

Remember a Lifeline Telephone Crisis Supporter is available 24-hours a day

## Lifeline 13 11 14

State Government 24-hour Hotline	1800 173 349
Energex	13 62 62
Ergon	13 22 96
Alcohol & Drug Information Service	1800 177 833
Child Protection Safety Centre	1800 177 135
Ambulance, Fire, Police	000
Centrelink	132 850
UnitingCare National Debt Helpline	1800 007 007
Domestic Violence Line	1800 811 811
Family Drug Support	1300 368 186
Interpreting Services	131 450
Kids Help Line	1800 551 800
Legal Aid	1300 651 188

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