



INFORMATION FOR AUSTRALIANS WHO ARE RETURNING FROM DISASTER AFFECTED AREAS

If you are returning from a country that has been affected by disaster, you may have sustained injury or experienced situations that were distressing or emotionally challenging. People can react in a variety of ways to these experiences.

It is not uncommon to have trouble adjusting and/or feel unsafe after a traumatic event. You may have some sleep disturbance, fear or anxiety. It is important to understand that you are not alone and that many other people will have similar feelings, or responses. The response to a trauma may be experienced immediately after the event or sometime much later.

Having distressing thoughts and feelings after a traumatic event is not a sign of personal weakness. However, when these responses persist or significantly impact your ability to return to your usual activities it may be necessary to seek additional support.

In particular, children absorb the tension, uncertainty, confusion and fear around them following traumatic events. Try to create a sense of calm. Reassure children that they are safe and there is someone there to take care of them. Try to return them to a normal routine as quickly as is reasonably possible.

Prevention is better than cure

Recovery from exposure to traumatic events is often helped by talking it over with others. People who readily use formal and informal support from family, friends, clergy or other supports generally recover better from stressful situations.

The Australian, State and Territory Governments provide services that can support recovery to tragic events, in conjunction with Local Government and local community groups, churches, cultural groups, and agencies.

Your GP is your gateway to mental health services

If you experience persistent issues that interfere with your life you are encouraged to **talk to your GP**, or for urgent mental health support contact the 24-hour contact number for your home state or territory on the other side.

PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMATION EVEN IF YOU DO NOT NEED IT NOW.
IT MAY BE USEFUL IN THE FUTURE.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Visit your GP

[healthdirect.gov.au/
australian-health-services](http://healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services)

Your GP can refer you to the most appropriate mental health services with the *Better Access* scheme.

headspace

headspace.org.au

headspace provides young people from 12 to 25 years old with free or low cost services to young people, their families and friends.

Suicide Call-Back Service

suicidecallbackservice.org.au

For anyone considering suicide, living with someone considering suicide, or bereaved by suicide, the Suicide Call-Back Service is available.

Lifeline

13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

Lifeline is a crisis support service that provides short-term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.

Primary Health Networks

health.gov.au/phn

Primary Health Networks can help you locate person-centred health services near you.

Digital Services

headtohealth.gov.au

Digital health services can be used as an alternative to face-to-face therapies in times of need, or when and where convenient.

Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue is available 24/7 by phone or online via chat or email, to assist with mental health issues.

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

Kids Helpline is a free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years.

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS TELEPHONE SERVICES IN AUSTRALIAN STATES AND TERRITORIES

ACT

1800 629 354

NSW

1800 011 511

NT

1800 682 288

QLD

13 11 14 (Lifeline)

SA

13 14 65

TAS

1800 332 388

WA

1300 555 788 (Metro)
1800 676 822 (Peel)

VIC

[betterhealth.vic.gov.au/
healthyliving/trauma](http://betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/trauma)

IF YOU OR A LOVED ONE IS IN A LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION CALL **000** IMMEDIATELY