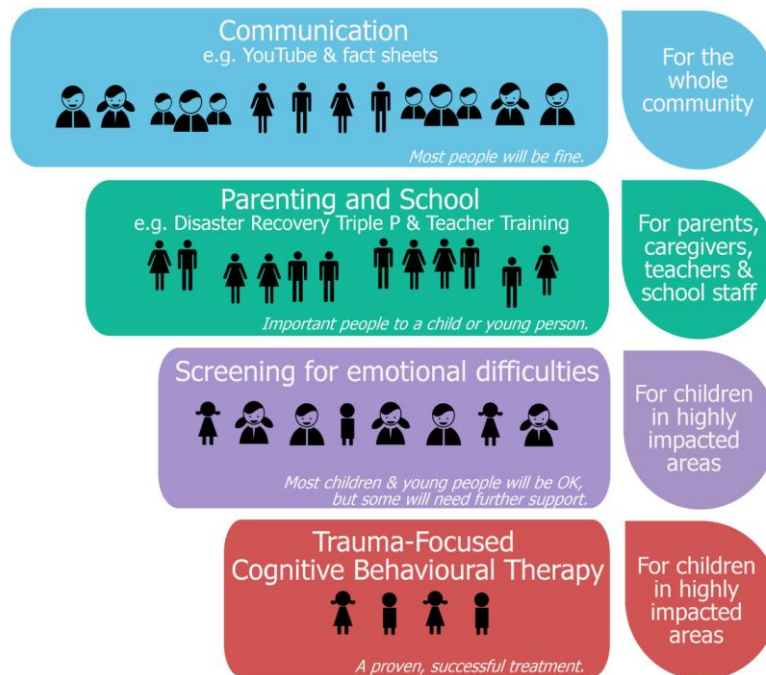


beyondblue Child and Youth Bushfire Response

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the *beyondblue* Child and Youth Bushfire Response?

The response is a free program for children and adolescents, parents and caregivers, teachers and health professionals affected by the bushfires. Each 'step' of the response is highly effective and has been used after previous natural disasters. The image below shows the different 'steps' of the response.



Our experience is that it is completely normal for people (children, adolescents and adults alike) to be stressed and distressed after a disaster. The vast majority of people make a good recovery. However, a small number of children and adolescents will experience ongoing distress. One of the key goals of the *beyondblue* response is to make sure that these young people receive the help they need. The *beyondblue* response also aims to:

1. Help parents and other adults feel confident to manage any distress that children and adolescents might be experiencing after the bushfires.
2. Provide training to teachers and local clinicians about working with children and adolescents following a traumatic event.

* Teachers

Teachers will be offered training to help recognise the signs of children's emotional and behavioural distress following a traumatic event. Training will also cover practical tips for managing this distress in the classroom. Teachers are not expected to become child therapist, rather the training will give teachers confidence to recognise when a child may need extra support.

* Parents

The *beyondblue* team will provide a 2-hour seminar to parents which will look at emotional and behavioural responses in children and adolescents following a disaster. Other topics include:

- managing children's distress
- answering children's questions
- when to seek professional help
- how to get professional help.

This is NOT a seminar about how to improve parenting – it is a chance for parents to get some useful information about children's reactions and provide an opportunity to ask questions.

* Children and Adolescents

Soon after a natural disaster it is common for many people to have some emotional symptoms (i.e. disturbed sleep). It is only several months later that it becomes clear which children are still struggling.

To help identify children who may benefit from therapy, screening will be conducted by the *beyondblue* team and school staff. The team have done this many times before and it is not a distressing activity for children. Screening involves a simple pencil and paper questionnaire. Parents will need to give their permission for their child to take part in screening.

If the screening results show a child is struggling, individual therapy will be offered. Therapy will take place within their school to minimize inconvenience for families. Therapy will be provided by trained psychologists who are completing postgraduate training at the University of Tasmania. Therapy may also be provided by School Psychologists or Social Workers. Supervision is provided by the experienced *beyondblue* team as well as University of Tasmania clinical staff.

Treated children and adolescents will be followed up over time to make sure the improvements they make in treatment are maintained.

Who is the *beyondblue* team?

The *beyondblue* team is led by Drs. Vanessa Cobham and Brett McDermott, who are based at the Mater Children's Hospital in Brisbane. They have been selected to lead the response as they have many years of experience in working with children, adolescents and families following natural disasters – including the Queensland floods, Cyclone Yasi, the Christchurch earthquake, Cyclone Larry and the Victorian bushfires.

In the aftermath of the fires, Tasmania faces the same problem as any disaster-impacted community – existing services are already functioning at capacity. Thus an important legacy, which is key to the *beyondblue* response, is training and supervising Tasmanian therapists to deliver the program. It is the hope of *beyondblue* that Tasmania will benefit in the long run by having a group of highly trained and skilled workers who are able to work with children, adolescents and families after a disaster.



Who can I contact?

* *beyondblue* Response Team:

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School Principals in disaster affected areas have been consulted about the *beyondblue* response and are a good contact point to find out what is happening in your school.

The Tasmania Bushfire Recovery Unit website has information and updates about the *beyondblue* response

<http://www.bushfirerecovery.tas.gov.au/>

The *beyondblue* response is approved by the Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services.

Where can I find more information?

- Tips sheets and information about depression and anxiety are available from the *beyondblue* website
www.beyondblue.org.au
- Disaster specific information about children, adolescents and families is available from the Australian Trauma Loss and Grief Network
www.earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au
- The Red Cross has a couple of websites with information about emotional disaster recovery
<http://www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx>
<http://aftertheemergency.redcross.org.au/>
- Headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, have videos and factsheets for young people, parents and workers available on their websites:
<http://www.headspace.org.au/is-it-just-me/find-information/grief>
<http://www.headspace.org.au/is-it-just-me/find-information/natural-disasters>
<http://www.headspace.org.au/parents-and-carers/find-information/natural-disasters>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Tehowdx11Y>