

07 MARCH 2022

Beyond Blue reminds communities impacted by flood disaster that support is available

Beyond Blue is reminding people that it is common to feel overwhelmed by the flooding events impacting the east coast of Australia and that support is available.

Beyond Blue Lead Clinical Adviser Dr Grant Blashki said communities were feeling devastated by the floods.

“It’s really tough for people in the disaster zones because they’ve been dealing with the pandemic and now they’re enduring a major weather event that is taking lives and destroying properties,” Dr Blashki said.

“The impact of losing loved ones, evacuations, and homes and businesses being destroyed can leave lasting effects on people’s mental health. We encourage people to seek support as early as possible because this can help us build resilience and stay well.”

Dr Blashki said common reactions to floods and traumatic events include:

- Feeling overwhelmed, numb or detached
- Inability to focus or plan ahead
- Constantly tearful
- Intrusive memories or bad dreams related to the flood
- Sleep disturbances
- Constant questioning – “What if I had done x, y or z, instead?”
- Replaying the event and inventing different outcomes

“For many people, these feelings will be at their most intense for the first few weeks, and they’ll then subside and people will start to find themselves on more of an even keel,” Dr Blashki said.

“But if after a month you notice you still not yourself – or that your day-to-day functioning is affected, you may benefit from support.”

Dr Blashki said he was moved by the willingness shown by flood-affected communities to help others.

“Floods like this and extreme weather events will become more common as our planet changes so it’s heartening to see these incredible communities come together to support each other,” he said.

“Looking out for each other will be a crucial part of the recovery process. There will be people who are lonely or isolated, so looking out for one another is really important.”

Dr Blashki also recommended Phoenix Australia for further information about supporting children and young people through disaster.

“If young people want to talk about what’s happened and how they are feeling, that’s great. Listen to what they’re saying and give them a chance to express how they’re feeling,” Dr Blashki said.

“Answer questions openly and honestly and don’t be afraid to say you don’t have all the answers.”

ENDS

Contact media@beyondblue.org.au for interview opportunities

Beyond Blue Support Service: 1300 22 4636 or [beyondblue.org.au/getsupport](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport)