



Save the Children

JOURNEY OF HOPE

A workshop for parents and caregivers:
Understanding and coping with stress



Supporting parents and caregivers of children affected by the dual impacts of bushfires and COVID-19

Tens of thousands of children in Australia have been directly affected by the catastrophic 2019-20 bushfires. Just as communities had a chance to start rebuilding their lives, the COVID-19 pandemic halted the recovery process, closing schools and adding further stress on children and their caregivers.

We know that in any emergency children are the most vulnerable, during the immediate crisis and afterwards. And that caregivers can play a vital role in their recovery and long-term well-being.

Save the Children is committed to making sure children and their caregivers have the support they need to process what they've experienced and the strategies they require to cope with the long-term impacts of the bushfire and COVID-19 crises.

JOURNEY OF HOPE MODULE 1: A WORKSHOP FOR CAREGIVERS

Journey of Hope is a specially designed program to help children and caregivers cope with collective trauma, identify triggers and stressors, develop their natural resilience and coping strategies, and strengthen their social support networks. Normally the program is delivered face to face, but in response to the challenges posed by COVID-19, we have adapted it to deliver the content online.

The first online module designed for caregivers is now available free of charge to parents and caregivers from affected schools and communities.

THE KEY ROLE CAREGIVERS PLAY IN CHILDREN'S RECOVERY

Children's well-being depends significantly on the stability and well-being of their caregivers. Children understand and process events based on messages they receive from those responsible for them. Helping caregivers to process their experiences and develop inner and collective resources for coping is the first step in increasing their capacity to support children. By attending first to their own emotional needs, caregivers can be fully present and attentive to the needs of children.

Supporting caregivers in processing recent events, coping with current challenges and realising healthier futures strengthens their ability to care for children in their school and living environments.



WHAT THE WORKSHOP COVERS

The workshop utilises psychoeducation techniques to normalise common reactions to a traumatic event, major life changes and ongoing stress. Covering information on stress and stress reactions gives participants a language to help them label and discuss their experiences. In addition to normal reactions to stress, signs and symptoms indicating the need for professional mental health services are reviewed and referral recommended, when necessary. Additionally, participants experience and are given practical strategies for stress management and relaxation through breath work and meditation.

In addition to stress and trauma reactions, practical knowledge and tools are provided to expand the capacities of parents, school staff and local community members to support children and practice self-care.

The program goals:

- Understanding reactions to stress and enhancing coping skills.
- Identifying and amplifying individual strengths and assets.
- Building trust and fostering collaboration and community engagement.

WHY SAVE THE CHILDREN?

Save the Children is one of Australia's largest community development and emergency response organisations dedicated to helping children. We've been working to change the story for vulnerable children, young people and families in Australia for over 65 years. While the bushfires raged and in the immediate aftermath, we reached over 1770 children and almost 300 parents and carers in 17 communities in NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

MORE MODULES TO FOLLOW SOON

As the next stage of our bushfire response, we are now rolling-out the implementation of Journey of Hope. Online modules for children will follow soon, and as schools reopen, we will also offer the face to face version of Journey of Hope.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The Workshop for Caregivers is delivered online in a single two-hour session. In order to take part, participants require an internet connection and a computer, tablet or other connected device.

To find out more, visit savethechildren.org.au/journeyofhope

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