Community Service Organisations

This information will help you prepare for and reduce the impact of emergencies on your clients, your employees and your organisation.

Prepare your organisation

Your clients rely on you. What plans does your organisation have in place to ensure they still get the care they need during an emergency?

Have you talked about and planned for what happens if...

- Your organisation is physically impacted by an emergency?

- Your employees are affected by the emergency and can't get to work?

- You can't reach clients due to power failure, blocked roads, phone and internet outages?

In just six steps, you can develop a strategy to re-establish your service after an emergency and adapt to new and emerging needs, thanks to the Australian Council of Social Services resource, _Six Steps to Resilience._

Prepare your clients

Your clients trust you. Talk to them regularly about getting ready for emergencies as part of routine visits.

Know their risk: For example, do they live in a bush fire, flood or heatwave area? This will help you prepare them for an emergency.

Identify their needs: Can they access and understand emergency information and warnings? Can they evacuate themselves if needed? Are they connected with family, friends or neighbours?

Help them prepare: Being prepared for emergencies works best when it is part of everyday life. Don't leave it to the last minute.

Refer to the *Help your clients prepare for emergencies* fact sheet.

How emergencies are managed

Detailed emergency management plans (EMPLANs) are in place at the state, regional and local level. They set out the roles for government and emergency service agencies.

For more information on these plans, read the *How emergencies are managed in NSW* fact sheet.

Your role in recovery

Following an emergency, contact your local council for information about how community recovery is coordinated. Your organisation will have an important role to:

- Connect with clients
- Understand their needs
- Provide information and support
- Link them with services
- Share knowledge with other organisations
- Help inform recovery activities and services

For more information, refer to the *Community recovery after an emergency* and *Emotional and Social recovery* **fact** sheets.

GET READY

How emergencies are managed in NSW

There are arrangements in place.

Detailed emergency management plans (EMPLANs) are in place at the state, regional and local levels. They set out the roles, responsibilities and relationships for state and local government, and emergency service organisations.

What you can do to help

» Read your Local EMPLAN, which should be available on your council's website

» Develop a business continuity plan

» Talk to your clients regularly about getting ready for emergencies as part of routine visits

» Following an emergency, contact your council for more information about how community recovery is being managed

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STAGES

EMERGENCIES IN NSW ARE MANAGED ACROSS FOUR STAGES:

PREVENT
Before an emergency, making communities safer by reducing the risk of emergencies, e.g. building levees to prevent flooding, or controlled burns to help prevent bush fires.

PREPARE
Before an emergency, working with communities to help them know what to do and to take action. It can include making plans about how to cope in an emergency, preparing properties by doing things like cleaning gutters or having electrical wiring and heaters checked and serviced.

RESPOND
During an emergency, working together to provide a coordinated response to reduce the danger to the community. It can include organising evacuations, rescuing people from harm or restoring electricity in a blackout.

RECOVER
After an emergency, reconnecting and supporting people, helping them to deal with the impact on their lives. It can include repairing the damage caused by the emergency, helping people to return home when it is safe and providing ongoing assistance with health and wellbeing.

Emergency management arrangements

Each year, NSW communities experience bush fires, home fires, floods, storms, heatwaves, power outages and other emergencies. The management of emergencies is shared between all levels of government, emergency service agencies, non-government organisations, businesses, community groups and community members.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

There are agencies who are responsible for responding to emergencies, including NSW Police. NSW emergency service organisations have responsibility for specific hazards:

NSW State Emergency Service	storms, floods, tsunami
NSW Rural Fire Service	bush fires
Fire & Rescue NSW	fires in cities and towns, building fires, search and rescue, building collapse

OTHER AGENCIES

Different NSW Government agencies have responsibilities for functional areas and provide support to emergency services. These include:

- » Agriculture and animal services
- » Telecommunication services
- » Energy and utility services
- » Engineering services
- » Environmental services
- » Health services
- » Public information services
- » Transport services
- » Welfare services (including evacuation centres and emergency relief)

LOCAL

Local Emergency Management Committees (LEMCs) have responsibility for organising how emergencies are planned for and managed in local government areas. It's done by developing and implementing Local EMPLANs. Councils have a Local Emergency Management Officer (LEMO) who is the contact for emergency management.

REGIONAL

New South Wales is divided into 11 emergency management regions. Regional Emergency Management Committees (REMCs) coordinate emergency planning, preparation, training and management at this level.

STATE

The EMPLAN is the NSW State Emergency Management Plan. It sets out the state-level arrangements for emergency management.

WHAT IS IN YOUR LOCAL EMPLAN?

A Local EMPLAN:
- » Identifies hazards and emergency risks for the local area
- » Sets out the roles and responsibilities of Local Government, emergency service organisations and other agencies to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies
- » Describes how support will be co-ordinated for affected communities, and
- » Ensures compliance with legislation

GO TO YOUR COUNCIL WEBSITE TO ACCESS YOUR LOCAL EMPLAN

NSW GOVERNMENT

Help your clients prepare for emergencies

Support your clients

Each year, NSW communities experience bush fires, home fires, floods, storms, heatwaves, power outages and other emergencies.

You're a trusted source of advice and support.

Being prepared can improve recovery. Talk with your clients regularly about getting ready for emergencies as part of routine visits.

Ask your clients what they will be able to do for themselves in an emergency and what extra help they may need.

TALK ABOUT YOUR CLIENTS' FUNCTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND SUPPORT NEEDS

» Communication
» Management of health
» Assistive technology
» Personal support
» Assistance animals
» Transportation
» Living situation
» Social connectedness

Not all of these will be relevant to each individual.

Know the risk

Know what types of hazards your clients face. This will help you prepare them for an emergency.

Do your clients live in a bush fire, flood or heatwave area?

Are they well connected with their family, friends or neighbours?

Do they have transport if they need to evacuate?

Can they access emergency information and warnings?

Get ready

Being prepared before, during and after emergencies will help to reduce the impact for your clients, your organisation and the community.

Help your clients:

Write down contact details for neighbours, family and friends

Scan or make copies of important documents

Know how to access emergency warnings and information

Keep a list of current prescription medications

Make sure insurance is adequate and up-to-date

Have a leash or carrier, food and vaccination records for pets

Complete a checklist of things to take in case of evacuation

DO YOU HAVE A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN?

Your clients rely on you. What plans does your organisation have to ensure they still get the care they need in an emergency?

Talk about and plan for what happens if…

» Staff are affected by the emergency and can't come in to work?

» You can't reach your clients because of road blocks, storm damage or flooding?

» You need to check on your clients but the phone network is down?

» The power's out for an extended time?

KEY RESOURCES

Selected resources to help you help your clients prepare for emergencies.

Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness
– The University of Sydney

Local Emergency Management Guidelines for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction in NSW
– The University of Sydney

The Six Steps to Resilience - Australian Council of Social Service

Australian Red Cross
– **www.redcross.org.au**

» RediPlan

» Get Prepared app

» Collective Trauma Events: Best Practice Guidelines

» Disaster Ready: a guide for planning and facilitating workshops for the community service sector

Local Emergency Management Plan – go to your council website.

For links to these resources go to **emergency.nsw.gov.au/ getready/csos**

NSW EMERGENCY SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

Emergency warnings and information about preparing for specific hazards

» Fire and Rescue NSW
– **www.fire.nsw.gov.au**

» NSW Police
– **www.police.nsw.gov.au**

» NSW Rural Fire Service
– **www.rfs.nsw.gov.au**

» NSW State Emergency Service
– **www.ses.nsw.gov.au**

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, CONTACT YOUR COUNCIL OR LOCAL EMERGENCY SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

NSW GOVERNMENT

GET READY ✓

Community recovery after an emergency

All levels of government, emergency services, community service organisations, businesses, non-profits, community groups and community members have an important part to play in recovery. Recovery activities are coordinated through local, regional and state recovery plans.

The people who live in the community will know best what they need and should be supported to lead their own recovery.
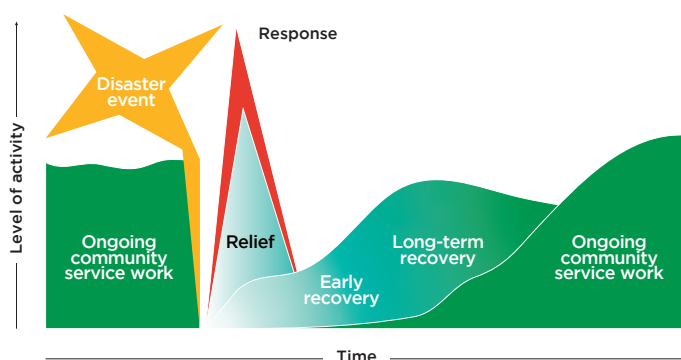
Following an emergency, contact your council for more information about how community recovery is being managed, including recovery committees.

YOUR ROLE IN RECOVERY

Your organisation will have an important role to:

» Connect with clients
» Understand their needs
» Provide clients with information and support
» Link clients with services
» Share your local knowledge and connections with other organisations
» Help inform recovery activities and services

RECOVERY IS OFTEN LONG TERM

Evacuations

An evacuation centre will be opened by the NSW Government if required. Emergency services provide information about evacuation via multiple channels.

Do your clients know where to access this information? Can they evacuate unassisted? Will they be able to stay with family or friends away from the impacted area? Will they need to bring medication and/or medical equipment?

» Emergencies can disrupt service delivery and demand for services is likely to increase.
» Recovery starts as soon as an emergency occurs and can continue for months or even years.
» Recovery needs and issues are complex and will change over time.

Source: Adapted from Australian Disaster Resilience Community Recovery Handbook (AIDR 2018).

Companion animals are welcome at evacuation centres. Do your clients have an evacuation plan for their pets? For example, do they have collar and lead or carrier, food, bedding, and any medication, etc.

RECOVERY CENTRES

Recovery centres are establised by the NSW Government if required after an event to operate as a one-stop shop. People who have been affected can get information, assistance and support, and talk about their experience.

Depending on the emergency, services may include:

» Financial support

» Mental health and counselling support services

» Local government services

» Legal and advocacy services

» Disaster-specific advice, e.g. safe clean up and waste removal

» Insurance advice

Contact your council to find the location of a recovery centre (when one is open) in your community.

Stages of recovery

RELIEF	EARLY RECOVERY	MEDIUM-LONG-TERM RECOVERY
Days	Weeks-Months	Month-Years

RELIEF — Days

» Emergency services may still be responding to the emergency

» Evacuation centres may open

» People are likely to need:
  • food and water
  • shelter
  • first aid
  • transport
  • help to reconnect with family or friends

» Assistance may be provided for immediate needs

» Recovery information may be shared via community meetings, noticeboards or social media

Can your service: connect with people who are at risk? Provide information to relief and recovery services? Provide recovery information to your clients?

EARLY RECOVERY — Weeks-Months

» Recovery centres may open

» People may need help to:
  • return home safely or relocate
  • access funding or donations
  • contact their insurance company
  • find out about property clean-up
  • organise/attend funerals or other recovery events

» Recovery committees may be established

» Organisations will develop programs and activities to support recovery

» Grants for households/community groups may be provided

Can your service: support your clients to return home when safe? Collect and share recovery information? Help gather data on community needs and capacities?

MEDIUM-LONG-TERM RECOVERY — Month-Years

» Recovery committees develop and implement Recovery Action Plans

» Recovery programs are delivered

» People may need help with:
  • repairs and rebuilding
  • insurance claims
  • physical and mental health
  • support for children and youth
  • counselling
  • funding and grants
  • memorials and anniversaries
  • being ready for emergencies

» Recovery activities transition to local service arrangements over time

Will the needs of your clients increase? What additional activities may you need to deliver? How will this inform your organisational planning?

GRANTS FOR HOUSEHOLDS

Grants may be available for people whose homes and essential household items have been destroyed or damaged by a natural disaster. This assistance is targeted for:

» People who have limited financial resources; and

» People who have no insurance for essential household items and structural repairs to homes.

Contact NSW Disaster Welfare Services about grants that may be available for your clients.
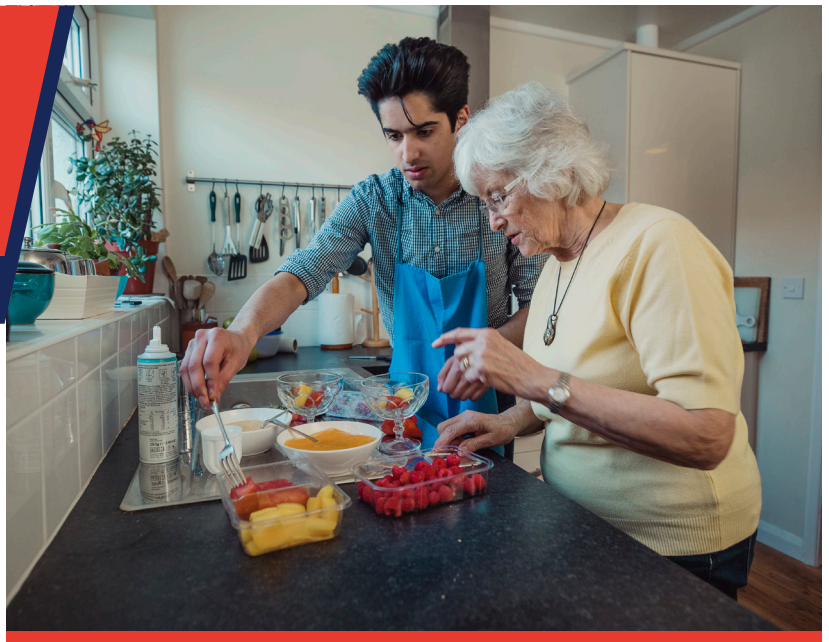
RECOVERY CONTACTS

Your council

NSW Disaster Welfare Services (NSW Government) – **1800 018 444**

Centrelink – **13 24 68**

Legal Aid NSW – **1300 888 529**

Australian Red Cross – **1800 077 284**

Insurance Council of Australia – **02 9253 5100**

RSPCA – Disaster Management Plans – **1300 278 3589**

NSW GOVERNMENT

GET READY ✓

Emotional and social recovery

Living through an emergency can have a major impact on mental and physical health.

The experience can also disrupt relationships, networks and connections, and can affect the way the community functions. While some people will need extra mental health assistance to recover, most people will recover with the help of support workers, family and friends.

Your knowledge of your clients' needs, capabilities and how the emergency has impacted them specifically, will be important in helping to work out their needs for recovery.

The threat, or the actual experience of an emergency, can increase the level of adrenalin in a person's body. It can affect how they think and feel. In the days following an emergency, your clients may feel:

» distressed, shaky, confused
» unable to sleep or extremely tired
» unable to make decisions
» worried about the future
» overwhelmed by what has happened
» concerned for their family and friends, their home or their pets – or all of these

Some people who have been affected will need emotional and social support during and immediately after the emergency. Depending on the type and scale of the event and the way people have been impacted, this need can continue for months or years.

Health and wellbeing in recovery

Following an emergency, people will experience a variety of reactions. This is to be expected given the circumstances.

Their feelings may change over the weeks, months or years that follow an emergency. This may influence their recovery.
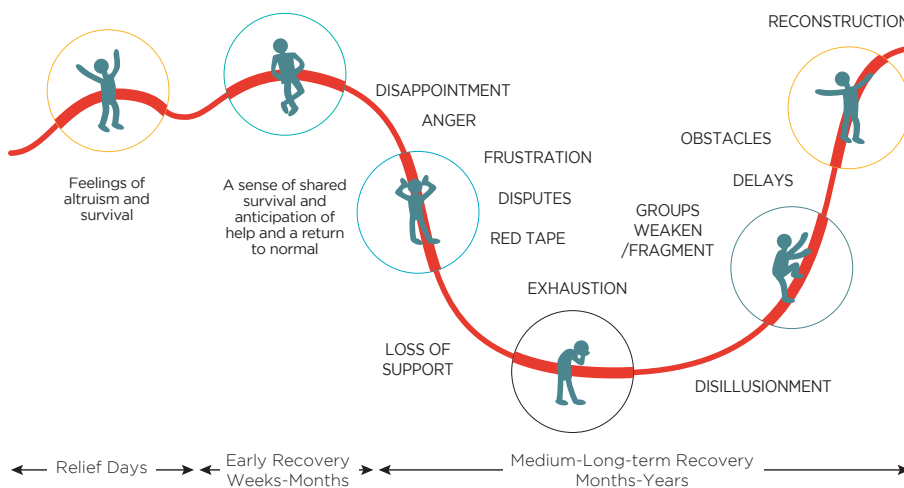
Here are some simple things you can do to support your clients during recovery:

» Listen to their feelings, fears and worries
» Reassure them help is available
» Connect them to the services they require
» Support them to think about tasks one at a time

Encourage your clients to:

» Get back into a routine
» Participate in fun, enjoyable activities
» Be active
» Get enough rest
» Eat well and stay hydrated
» Stay connected with family, friends and neighbours

DIFFERENT PHASES THAT INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES MAY EXPERIENCE AFTER A DISASTER

RECONSTRUCTION

DISAPPOINTMENT

ANGER

OBSTACLES

FRUSTRATION

DELAYS

DISPUTES

GROUPS
WEAKEN
/FRAGMENT

RED TAPE

Feelings of
altruism and
survival

A sense of shared
survival and
anticipation of
help and a return
to normal

EXHAUSTION

LOSS OF
SUPPORT

DISILLUSIONMENT

← Relief Days → ← Early Recovery
Weeks-Months → ← Medium-Long-term Recovery
Months-Years →

Source: Adapted from Australian Disaster Resilience Community Recovery Handbook (AIDR 2018).

Self-care for workers

Helping clients during recovery is important, rewarding work, but it can also be demanding.

Just like your clients, you can feel overwhelmed by the emergency and worried about the future. You and your family may also have been directly impacted by the emergency.

It's important to look after yourself during this time.

» Get plenty of rest
» Stay hydrated
» Eat well
» Stay connected to family, friends and colleagues
» Talk through any concerns you have

KEY RESOURCES

Australian Disaster Resilience Community Recovery Handbook – The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Walk With – online training tool - Gateway Family Services

Australian Red Cross
» Collective Trauma Events: Best Practice Guidelines
» Psychological First Aid: An Australian guide to supporting people affected by disaster
» Coping with a Major Personal Crisis

For links to these resources go to
emergency.nsw.gov.au/getready/csos

RECOVERY CONTACTS

Your council

NSW Disaster Welfare Services
(NSW Government) – **1800 018 444**

Centrelink – **13 24 68**

Mental Health Line – **1800 051 511**

Lifeline – **13 11 14**

Beyond Blue – **1300 224 636**

Australian Red Cross – **1800 077 284**

Insurance Council of Australia
– **02 9253 5100**

RSPCA – Disaster Management Plans
– **1300 278 3589**

NSW
GOVERNMENT

Key resources

Selected resources to help you help your clients prepare for and recover from emergencies.

Preparing

Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness – a process tool and framework for enabling disaster preparedness with people with chronic health conditions and disability – The University of Sydney

Local Emergency Management Guidelines for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction in NSW – guidelines for disability support providers to understand Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction principles and provide practical activities to engage the community in building resilience – The University of Sydney

ACT! A Collaborative Toolkit for Home Support Providers to Prepare Older People for Emergencies - this toolkit supports home support providers to empower older people to make decisions about preparing for emergencies. It also builds the capacity of home support providers to train their staff and volunteers on how to discuss emergency preparedness with their clients and make referrals to emergency services for assistance.

For more information email emergencyprep@nswmealsonwheels.org.au

Australian Red Cross –www.redcross.org.au

- Create an Emergency Plan –template to develop an all-hazards emergency plan
- Get Prepared app – helps people connect with their key support people and to do simple tasks to make them safer
- Collective Trauma Events: Best Practice Guidelines – information about supporting communities before, during and after collective trauma events
- Disaster Ready – a guide for planning and facilitating workshops for the community service sector to help organisations and clients prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Recovery

Australian Disaster Resilience Community Recovery Handbook – a comprehensive guide to community recovery in Australia – The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

National Principles for Disaster Recovery – Social Recovery Reference Group

Walk With – online training tool – Gateway Family Services

Australian Red Cross – www.redcross.org.au

- Collective Trauma Events: Best Practice Guidelines – information about supporting communities before, during and after collective trauma events and suggestions about ways to cope after an emergency
- Psychological First Aid: An Australian guide to supporting people affected by disaster
- Coping with a Major Personal Crisis – information about some of the reactions to abnormal situations
- Looking After Yourself and Your Family After a Disaster – tips for taking care of yourself and advice on how to help others when there's a crisis.

Contact NSW Emergency Services

For all life-threatening emergencies call 000

TTY

Call 106

National Relay Service

Fire & Rescue NSW

For house fires, vehicle fires and chemical hazards:

- Website
- Facebook
- RSS
- Twitter
- For general enquiries call 02 9265 2999

NSW Rural Fire Service

For bush fires:

- Website
- Facebook
- RSS
- Twitter
- Fires Near Me NSW: Android, iPhone
- Bush Fire Information call 1800 679 737
- For general enquiries call 02 8741 5555

NSW State Emergency Service

For floods, storms and tsunami:

- Website
- Facebook
- RSS
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Flickr
- YouTube

- For emergency help in a flood, storm or tsunami call 132 500

NSW Police Force

- Website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- For non-urgent assistance call 131 444

Counter Terrorism

- National Security Hotline
- Secure NSW

Translating and Interpreting Service

- www.tisnational.gov.au
- Multicultural NSW
- 1300 651 500

Apps

- Emergency+: Android, iPhone
- Live Traffic: Android, iPhone