

Activities

Community Leaders

Emerging
Minds.

Instructions

All activities provided are optional. Facilitators should review activities and include/not include as they consider relevant to their respective audiences and time available.

Recommended placement of activities is noted in the facilitator's handbook and in the notes of the provided slide presentations.

If preferred, an additional session of practical activities (30–40 mins) could be inserted between Sessions 1 and 2, creating a 3-session community education programme.

Activity 1: Psychological preparation – Practical exercise

Duration:
15–20 mins

Aim: To guide community members through the process of becoming psychologically prepared.

Resources: Psychological preparation for Natural Disasters. <https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/c24bf1ba-a5fc-45d5-a982-835873148b9a/Psychological-preparation-for-natural-disasters.pdf>

Instructions:

Part A: Work through the 'AIM 3 steps to being psychologically prepared'. Use the APS tip sheet to guide this process. Discuss the unhelpful psychological 'traps' that people can fall into (outlined in tip sheet) and how these can be mitigated. (5–10 mins)

Part B: Discuss how the AIM approach could be modified to be age-appropriate for children. Use the notes in the facilitator's handbook to guide this discussion. (5–10 mins)

Reinforce that it is important for adults to work through the AIM approach to psychological preparation themselves *before* working through the process with children.

Activity 2: Practise slow breathing

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To provide community members with some simple calming strategies for themselves and children.

Resources: Nil

Instructions: Participants quickly practise and discuss slow breathing. Let participants know that the first breathing exercise (4-count breathing) is good for adults and children, while Hissing Breath is more suited to children.

Adults & children

4-count breathing: Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4, filling the lungs completely. Hold the breath for a count of 4. Breathe out through your mouth for a count of 4, emptying the lungs. Repeat.

- Consider making a soft sighing sound as you breath out, pushing the air over the tongue forcefully enough that it would fog a mirror.
- You may consider increasing your breath count from 4 to 5 to 6, as you feel more relaxed and in control of your breath.

Children

Hissing Breath: Breathe in through the nose, long deep inhale, and out through the mouth on a hissing sound, slow and long. (Just like a snake!) Repeat.

Ask if anyone has any quick breathing or calming exercises they know of that could be used with children. Run through them.

Activity 3: Play Emerging Minds video ‘Supporting children in the short term after a disaster or traumatic event’

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: Use this video to break up the ‘text heavy’ content of the presentations. Note that while the video is targeted towards ‘parents and carers’ there are tips in there that all community members can use.

Resources: Internet access.

Instructions: Play video (<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/toolkits/community-trauma-toolkit/short-term/>) and ask participants if they have any questions or comments afterwards.

Activity 4: Create a self-care plan & pleasant events schedule

Duration:
10-20 mins

Aim: To encourage community self-care and the management of stress.

Resources: Completed self-care plan + blank self-care plan. Completed pleasant events schedule + blank pleasant events schedule.

Instructions: Provide participants with a copy of the nominated resources. To assist participants with identifying their personal signs of stress and potential management strategies use the example self-care plan (completed) as a prompt for brainstorming.

Ask community members to complete a self-care plan and pleasant events schedule for themselves. This may be undertaken during the session or (if time is short) as 'homework'.

Note: This activity can be delivered in small-group format, with each group brainstorming responses between themselves and the facilitator moving between groups to assist.