

Instructions

All activities provided below are optional. Facilitators should review activities and include or omit as they consider relevant to their audience and time constraints. Recommended placement of activities is noted in the facilitator's handbook and in the instructor footnotes of the provided PowerPoint.

It is recommended that a minimum of one activity is included per session.

Activity 1: Exploring Red Cross lesson guides

Duration:
5–15 mins

Aim: Information dissemination

Resources: Internet access

Instructions: Link to <https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies/resources-about-disasters/resources-for-parents-and-teachers> and briefly explore the relevant age group materials with participants (Preparedness and Recovery).

Activity 2: Practise slow breathing

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To encourage participants to share and explore slow breathing and/or relaxation strategies they could employ with children.

Resources: Nil

Instructions: Participants quickly practise and discuss slow breathing. Ask if participants have any slow breathing exercises they use and practise those as well.

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).

Activity 3: Practise helpful thoughts

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To encourage participants to think about helpful and unhelpful (frightening) thoughts that children might have during/following a disaster. (Can also be done in pairs or in groups)

Resources: Whiteboard

Instructions: Ask the group to nominate some scary thoughts that children in the age group they work with might have about a disaster (e.g. 'I don't know what to do', 'My heart is beating so fast I think it will burst'). As each 'scary thought' is generated, ask the group to now generate a 'helpful' thought that could replace the scary one (e.g. 'We've practised what to do in class, I'll just follow the plan and that should really help', 'I know how to keep calm'). Write these on the whiteboard.

Note: If working with educators of younger children/preschoolers, consider altering this activity to the generation of simple self-statements to assist young children (e.g. 'I am calm', 'I am safe', 'I can do it', 'I am brave', 'All is well').

Activity 4: Reflection and discussion: Child trauma responses (0–4 and 5–12 age groups)

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To encourage participant engagement and sharing of experience.

Resources: Nil

Instructions: Ask participants if they have any personal experience of seeing trauma reactions in children that they are willing to share confidentially. Stress the need to de-identify information so that the child cannot be identified by others.

- *What changes did you see in the child?*
- *Did you do/say anything in response?*

Activity 5: Reflection and discussion: Natural disaster events

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To encourage participant engagement and sharing of experience.

Resources: Nil

Instructions: Lead a discussion around the questions:

- *What natural disasters are most likely to occur in your area?*
- *Has anyone been involved in First Response-type services in natural disasters (e.g. SES, Army Reserve, Volunteers Queensland, with a local community group, etc.)? If so, can you share any of your experience of the event and how you felt during/after?*

Activity 6: Reflection and discussion: Cultural differences

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To encourage participants to think about how cultural differences may impact upon the responses that they see in children after a disaster.

Resources: Whiteboard

Instructions: Lead a discussion around the question:

Thinking about the children you currently care for/have in your classrooms, can you identify any cultural differences that might impact upon their emotional and behavioural responses after a natural disaster?

Note responses on whiteboard.

Activity 7: Reflection and discussion: Emphasising strengths

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To encourage a strengths-based approach to disaster recovery in young children.

Resources: Whiteboard

Instructions: Ask participants to jot down some thoughts on times when they have reinforced a young child's strengths while playing or doing an activity.

- *What did you do/say?*
- *How did the child react?*

Ask if anyone is willing to share.

Activity 8: Explore Birdie's Tree and other in-class activities (for child care workers)

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: Increase knowledge of resources available to assist younger children and babies.

Resources: Internet access

Instructions: Open Birdie's Tree (<https://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/natural-disaster-recovery/>) and take a tour around the activities and information there. Take time to open materials and explore with the participants.

Activity 9: Reflection and discussion: Provide choice to regain control

Duration:
5–10 mins

Aim: To encourage the use of 'choice' in classrooms after a natural disaster, in order to assist children with regaining a feeling of control.

Resources: Whiteboard

Instructions: Ask participants to jot down some thoughts on the follow question:

What are some ways that you could provide 'choice' to children within your classroom/ group environment after a natural disaster?

Ask if anyone is willing to share.

Activity 10: Brainstorming: How do you normally take care of yourself?

Duration:
5 mins

Aim: To encourage educators to think about ways they take care of themselves in their everyday lives. Creates some foundation ideas for Activities 11 and 12.

Resources: Whiteboard

Instructions: Ask participants to nominate ways they take care of themselves. Use prompts to get started, as necessary (e.g. 'go for a run', 'read a book', 'do yoga', etc.).

Jot down responses on whiteboard.

Activity 11: Create a pleasant events schedule

Duration:
15 mins

Aim: To encourage educator self-care by coming up with ideas and strategies to help manage stress.

Resources: Completed pleasant events schedule/Blank pleasant events schedule

Instructions: Hand out and discuss the completed pleasant events schedule with participants. Ask participants to complete their own.

Activity 12: Create a self-care plan

Duration:
15 mins

Aim: To encourage educator self-care by preparing for difficult situations.

Resources: Completed self-care plan/Blank self-care plan

Instructions: Discuss the completed self-care plan with participants. Ask participants to complete their own.

Activity 13: Introduction of resource matrix

Duration:
5 mins

Aim: Increase knowledge of available resources.

Resources: Resource matrix

Instructions: The resource matrix can be introduced at any time during the training.
A copy should be given to all participants.