

A whole child approach to disaster recovery

Case Study - Aiesha

Aiesha is nine years old and lives in a coastal town in Northern Queensland. Last year, she experienced a severe cyclone that devastated her community. The cyclone caused extensive damage to homes and infrastructure, and Aiesha's own house was severely affected, leaving her family without a safe place to live.

Aiesha, her mum, Tiffany and her siblings, five-year-old Mia and seven-year-old Luke have been living in a small caravan they bought off their neighbour while they wait for the insurance money to come through. While they're grateful to have somewhere safe to stay, the confined space and disruption of routine has placed additional stress on the family.

Aiesha and Luke both have ADHD and Aiesha had also been diagnosed with anxiety prior to the disaster. Since the cyclone, they've both been struggling more intensely with sensory overload and emotional dysregulation. Aiesha has been experiencing frequent nightmares and Tiffany is struggling to get her off to school. Luke has been having more violent outbursts and meltdowns, which his younger sister Mia finds particularly distressing.

Aiesha's mother separated from the children's father two years ago and he no longer has any contact with them. She works part-time as a receptionist and relies on her older sister and parents for caregiving support, as she can't afford to pay for out-of-school-hours care (OSHC). However, her parents' home and her sister's business were also damaged in the cyclone, so they've been unable to offer as much support as they usually would. Tiffany has always considered herself pretty resilient, but she's having a hard time supporting Aiesha, Mia and Luke emotionally while managing her own stress.

Aiesha, Luke and Mia all attend the local primary school, which fortunately only received minor damage and reopened shortly after the cyclone. Aiesha has a close relationship with her teacher, Ms Lane, who has noticed Aiesha becoming increasingly withdrawn and distracted following the cyclone.