



NATURAL DISASTER AND MAJOR WEATHER EVENTS

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Even the most experienced frontline and emergency employee cannot predict how they will react in a particular situation.

Each incident or disaster is specific but one thing we know is that the level of stress whilst working is extremely high both individually and collectively. Many workers find they are unprepared for the stress and anxiety that can impact emergency and frontline responders following intense days, weeks, and sometimes months of work.

RECHARGING YOUR MENTAL FITNESS

- Maintain a healthy diet, get exercise and proper rest
- Spend time with family and friends whenever possible
- Meeting neglected daily personal tasks (i.e., pay bills, mow lawn, shop for groceries)
- Allow yourself to reflect upon what this experience has meant
- Talk to colleagues and family about your feelings if and when you need to.
- Go for a walk somewhere unaffected by the fires and reconnect with nature.

Many emergency and frontline workers often feel over sensitive and fragile when they return to business as usual.

REASONS FOR THIS INCLUDE:

- **Unrelenting fatigue** — Despite getting to sleep, you are not refreshed and may have chronic fatigue which often happens after a period of high stress. If you are getting rest and sleep but still feel exhausted upon waking, it's worth seeing a doctor about your fatigue as it can also signal an underlying medical condition.

- **Wanting to relate your experiences** — While you may want to share your experiences with others, you may be unsure if it is right to do so. This is normal. Exercise care when discussing your emergency response relief experiences, especially graphic and disturbing topics while in the presence of children or others who are not involved in your work.
- **Dissatisfaction with routine work** — It is very rewarding to be involved, directly or indirectly, in saving lives and protecting our fellow citizens property, health and safety. Most work does not provide such significant and immediate reinforcement. You may now see your daily work routine as lacking meaning and satisfaction. These feelings are normal especially when your adrenalin has been at a high level for days or weeks.
- **Difficulties with colleagues and supervisors** — You may not experience a welcome from your colleagues and supervisors that meets your expectations. Co-workers may not understand the difficulty of the work you did, may resent the recognition you receive or the fact they had to do aspects of your normal job or more routine tasks in your absence. The best way to respond to these temporary negative feelings is to show appreciation for their support during your deployment and be sensitive when relating your experiences and what their reality might have been while you were away.
- **Cultural issues** — Culture affects how an individual reacts to trauma. For example, showing emotion, discussing problems with others, or touching is acceptable with some groups and not with others. On the basis of this understanding, it is important to appreciate and respect these differences between individuals and respect preferences they may have.

Find out more



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