Communicating
in recovery

Australian Red Cross

Communicating in recovery

Use your phone camera to scan the QR code on the left to access a digital version of Communicating in Recovery

Contents.

1 General information

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for people or organisations planning to work, or currently working and managing information in a sudden onset post emergency/disaster environment, as well as those supporting communities experiencing long–term, slow onset crises and stress.

What period of emergency?

Recovery and support activities should begin as soon as an emergency occurs. Recovery is different from immediate response as it focusses on the longer–term support and recovery of individuals, households and communities.

While the advice in this guide is not designed for immediate relief services, Red Cross welcomes organisations to adapt this material to their specific needs. Much of the information provided is applicable to all stages of emergency management. It should also be noted that in the case of slow onset events – those that take time to emerge, to occur and/or to resolve, and in many cases may have no distinct beginning or end – long–term, on–going assistance in these situations is essential. As a result, communications with communities faced with slow onset disaster events is closely aligned to those undertaken during sudden onset events. This guide considers both communications in sudden onset and slow onset events.

What type of geographic focus?

There is no geographic focus to this resource. However, it has been developed primarily to suit the conditions of recovery in Australia. Use of this guide for other areas would require modifications where appropriate.

Who are you communicating with?

There are a number of different audiences in an emergency environment, all of whom need information. Target audiences may include affected individuals, the affected community, the broader general public, community leaders, the private sector, the media, government representatives and agencies, non–government agencies and emergency services organisations. More information on communications with different audiences can be found in Section 3 – Inclusive communication.

What type and scale of emergency?

While emergencies vary greatly, the basic rules and methods of communication in post-disaster recovery or in slow onset long-term emergencies are similar. Affected people often require the same types of information, irrespective of the type of emergency or its length. In fact, evidence has shown that the longer an event endures, the higher stress levels are seen overtime (i.e. during pandemics, long dry conditions or conflict). This resource takes an all-hazards approach with no geographic focus, and can be used in large or small emergencies, irrespective of length of time they occur.

© Department of Defence Corporal / David Cotton

Sudden onset vs slow onset

In this guide, we talk about communicating in both sudden onset, as well as long-term, slow onset emergency events. While the emergency environment may be different in a sudden onset or slow onset setting, this section highlights the common challenges people experience in accessing and taking in information, and how recovery communication principles apply in both contexts.

What is a sudden onset event?

A sudden onset disaster is one triggered by a hazardous event that emerges quickly or unexpectedly. Sudden onset disasters could be associated with bushfire, tropical cyclones, severe storms, earthquake, volcanic eruption, flash flood, chemical explosion, critical infrastructure failure, transport accident, etc.[1] While the hazard threat may be well defined and relatively short lived, the impacts often take years to recover from.

What is a slow onset event?

Slow onset disaster is defined as one that does not emerge from a sudden, distinct event (such as a fire or a flood). Slow onset disasters emerge gradually over time, and may be based on a confluence of different events. They often have no distinct start or finish, and the duration of the disaster, as well as the duration of the recovery, are difficult to define. Slow onset disasters and their impacts can last for years, with deep implications for health and wellbeing. Drought is a common example of a slow onset emergency, but there are others, including: sea-level rise, pandemic, climate change, irregular migration, macro-economic trends and overpopulation.[2]

The duration of slow onset events can lead to a long journey of fluctuating levels of stress and frustrations at different times, often triggered by changes, which either relieve or exacerbate the event. In many cases, people facing slow onset disaster also face sudden onset disasters and other secondary disruptions. Thus compounding the impacts. Moreover, evidence shows, the more disruptions a person is facing, the worse their wellbeing outcomes are.[3]

How sudden onset and slow onset events are similar?

Global challenges – such as climate change, food and energy price fluctuations, macroeconomic changes, irregular migration, population growth, antimicrobial resistances and urbanisation – are contributing to increasing vulnerability and humanitarian need.[4] These changing trends not only increase risk of sudden onset events, they are just as likely to lead to slow onset events that need urgent and on-going support.

Important considerations when communicating in both sudden onset and slow onset emergencies

It is important to understand that while hazard events may be different, communities and individuals are going through stressful and potentially traumatic experiences, changing the way they interact with the world around them. Some communities, particularly those affected by slow onset emergencies, may never truly enter a 'recovery' phase, however, their communications and information needs still need to consider the practical and psychological challenges they are experiencing. In recognising this, the principles and lessons highlighted in this guide can be applied in any emergency context.

©Cloud House Studio Danial Loadsman

What is recovery?

Recovery is the process of coming to terms with the impacts of a disaster and managing the disruptions and changes caused, which can result, for some people, in a new way of living. Being 'recovered' is being able to lead a life that individuals and communities value living, even if it is different to the life they were leading before the disaster event.

Recovery management refers to those programs that go beyond immediate relief to assist affected people to rebuild their homes, lives and services and to strengthen their capacity to cope with future disasters.[5]

Recovery services support emergency-affected people in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing.[6]

Following a disaster, immediate needs are met first. The rapid provision of food, water, shelter and medical care is vital to prevent loss of life and alleviate suffering. However, practical experience, backed by research, supports the view that even at this stage, relief must be conducted with a thought to planning a transition to early recovery and meeting the affected community's longer-term needs, including a focus on psychosocial support. In addition, as people begin to get back on their feet and rebuild their lives, agencies need to help them to strengthen their resilience to future hazards.[7]

Community recovery starts when communities begin to act as a self-organising system in which a myriad of interactions yield a shared sense of their journey and steps toward recovery. Effective recovery processes involve a partnership between many stakeholders - the affected community, the broader community, governments, non-government agencies and the private sector.

States and territories have well developed and well-rehearsed recovery plans and agencies to support the recovery process. The Australian Government additionally brings a range of resources and programs to support states and territories. Local governments are the level of government closest to the people affected and will best understand the dynamics and networks within the affected community.

It is important to remember that recovery is relative; there is no fixed point at which recovery can be said to have taken place. Recovery has happened when the community repairs or develops social, political and economic processes, institutions, and relationships that enable it to function in the new context within which if finds itself.[8] This process takes time and the length of time differs for every community. Recovery management is a continuum of the on-going community development process that takes place across all areas.

©Australian Red Cross / Dilini Perera

What are recovery communications?

'Recovery communications' refers to the practice of sending, gathering, managing and evaluating information in the period following an emergency and throughout disruptive long-term events. Well planned and well executed public information campaigns are vital to community recovery and long-term resilience building.

Communications in recovery and throughout community support operations should go beyond merely sending information, to actually forming a dialogue with the community. Effective communications provide a basis for important social processes such as bonding between individuals, groups and communities. These types of communications require care, sensitivity and time as communications can often be impeded by significant physical, logistical and psychosocial limitations.[9]

Successful recovery and support for communities is built on effective communication. When communicating in these situations you should:

- recognise that communication with a community should be two-way, and that input and feedback should be sought and considered over an extended time.
- ensure that information is accessible to audiences in diverse situations, addresses a variety of communication needs, and provided through a range of media and channels.
- establish mechanisms for coordinated and consistent communication with all organisations and individuals.
- repeat key messages because information is more likely to reach community members when they are receptive.[10]

©Australian Red Cross / Stephen McIvenna

Why are they important?

A sudden or slow onset emergency or disaster is usually a highly disruptive and stressful event for affected people. Access to quality information before, during and after an emergency can have a profound effect on the resilience and recovery of individuals and the community.[11] Successful communications operate as a form of community development and capacity building. Information empowers the community and individuals to understand their needs and influence their decisions. Information also increases social cohesion and assists in rebuilding the social fabric of a group that has undergone significant dislocation and stress. A well-informed and connected community will recover sooner and become stronger than one without effective communications and guiding information.

Community engagement and accountability

An important aspect of recovery communications and supporting communities at all stages of emergencies is to ensure accountability and engagement are a priority. Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) is an approach set out by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement ensuring communities are at the centre of all work undertaken by integrating communications and participation throughout program cycles and operations.[12]

This approach highlights four key elements:

Community participation and feedback

Share honest, timely and accessible information with communities, find ways to engage communities in program design and delivery, and set up systems for responding and acting on feedback, questions and complaints.[13]

Providing information as aid

During an emergency and throughout a potentially lengthy recovery period, people need information as much as any other resource. Share timely, actionable and potentially life-saving information with communities quickly, efficiently and at large-scale, using systems such as SMS, social media or radio broadcasts (see Section 2 - Methods of communication p.40).[14]

Behaviour and social change communication

Gain insights into the perceptions and behaviours of different groups within communities, and develop engaging and targeted messages. A way to do this is to conduct a communication needs assessment (see p.35). This will help provide valuable insights into a community's needs, as well as provide the means for better adapted communications around adopting or accessing support services.[15]

Evidence-based advocacy

Community members are experts on the challenges that affect them and their solutions, but they can find it difficult to make their voices heard by the relevant authorities or organisations. Effective CEA and communications can help create a platform for communities to advocate for their needs and have their voices heard.[16]

Three rules of recovery communications

**Before communicating,
ask yourself three questions:**

1

Is it relevant?

People affected by disaster are often overwhelmed by huge amounts of information. Following an emergency, people want to know:

- what support is available.
- what they need to do to qualify for support.
- what they can do if they have questions, concerns or complaints.
- how to participate in decision making.
- what is happening with the recovery process.

If communication material does not address one of these four broad categories, ask yourself: does it actually need to be sent? As communication is a two–way process, actually asking affected people what they need will help ensure your communications are relevant.

2

Is it clear?

During slow onset events and after an emergency, people often have trouble remembering or understanding information. It is not appropriate to use jargon, overly complicated or technical language.

- Short, sharp amounts of relevant and practical information is best.
- Ensure there is a clear call to action in the communication (what does the person actually have to do?).
- Ensure that there are formats available for people with a sensory impairment, and/or people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and/or people with low literacy. When using text–based communications, ensure the font and size of the text is readable.

3

Is it targeted?

The method of communication you use should fit the audience. Know your audience and the best way to reach them.

Just because you can send information or use a certain communication channel doesn't necessarily mean you should. For example, if you want to alert women in a small community about a maternal health clinic opening, placing posters in the local bakery may be more effective than updating your website with highly polished content.

Principles for recovery communications

Public information, not public relations

Broadly speaking, the aim of public relations (PR) is to promote an organisation; the aim of public information is to channel information to the relevant audiences.[17]

The aim of all recovery communications should be to assist the community, not to promote an organisation.

Respect people

When people are displaced or affected by an emergency, it is easy to only see their vulnerability. Communications should be respectful at all times. It is imperative that all communications recognise that affected people are rational beings able to make decisions for themselves. Materials that forget this principle can be viewed by the community as paternalistic and patronising.

The right to know

Put the community at the same status as your manager or funding source. They have a right to know about support processes in place, your services and other organisations' programs.[18]

Build on local assets – Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

ABCD refers to the practice of utilising and building upon existing local networks and strengths in the community. ABCD can also influence communications practices. Simply put, don't reinvent the wheel. For example, if a community already has a functioning and well-respected community radio network, utilise it to inform the community rather than developing new, and potentially ineffective, communication channels.

Following ABCD principles means you are working alongside the community rather than merely working in the community. ABCD empowers the community to lead and advocate for their own unique needs.

Ask the community how they want to receive information

Consulting with the community and actually asking them how they want to receive information will increase the effectiveness of your communications and increase community participation in the recovery and support process.

Acknowledge the impact

People affected by an emergency have potentially experienced a life-shaping event or may face on-going trauma. They have a need to have their story told from their own point of view, to acknowledge and validate their experience. It is also just as likely that some people may not need or want to have their story told. Be respectful and give people the time and space to determine if and how they would like to tell their story.

Repeat information

During an extended period of stress like those following an emergency or through slow onset disaster events, people often have trouble retaining and remembering information. People will be looking for information to assist their specific needs at that specific time, and ignoring everything else. What may be irrelevant to someone early in the emergency may be the exact information they require a few weeks later.

Information must be repeated and re-communicated periodically. An effective system of receiving and recording feedback from the community will help you know when, what and how to repeat your information.

Remember the 'unaffected'

Be careful not to focus solely on those directly affected in an emergency (for example, people whose properties were burned during a fire or those farming during drought). Those not directly affected can often experience significant stress following an emergency. Care should be taken not to alienate or differentiate between the 'affected' and 'unaffected' in an emergency as this distinction may not recognise the complexity of impacts.

No spin

People recovering from an emergency or living through a slow onset event have specific requirements and require information solely to address their needs. Communications containing rhetoric or brand leveraging information is counterproductive, as it will damage your reputation and just add to the communications 'noise' in the community.

The table below is a helpful checklist to use when communicating what programs and activities your organisation or group are providing to support communities. This list is only a suggested guide, not all of the boxes need to be ticked every time communications with community are undertaken.

Information about your organisation/community group, and primary goals and objectives	☐
Aim and purpose of program, activities, timeframes, geographical area and funding mechanisms (if appropriate)	☐
Staff/member code of conduct	☐
Design and assessment process for the program	☐
How community can get involved	☐
Information about grants or funding eligibility criteria (if appropriate)	☐
Monitoring and evaluation activities, and how the community and community leaders will be involved	☐
Discussion about appropriate complaints and response mechanism(s) with the community, including their right to complaint, how complaints can be made and when responses can be expected	☐
Explanation of the complaints and response mechanism(s) once established	☐
Significant changes to the program(s)	☐
Information around privacy and data protection of information collected through the program	☐

This table is adapted from IFRC's Community Engagement and Accountability Tool 9 – Checklist of information to share with communities.[19] Find the tool here: https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/TOOL-9-Checklist-info-for-communities_0.pdf

©Australian Red Cross / Rodney Dekker

Psychological challenges to communication and understanding information

Emergencies usually generate a number of possible effects on those involved. These include shock, high arousal, narrowing of focus, disbelief, tiredness, exhaustion, apathy and confusion about what has happened or is currently happening.

An emergency can influence a person's ability to take in information, think about it and remember it.

An emergency can impact:

Concentration	Memory	Decision-making
• the amount of new information that can be taken in and understood • the amount and complexity of detail that can be absorbed • the length of time a person can focus	• ability to recall spoken, written and/ or visual information • ability to recall simple or complex knowledge • ability to recall recent or past knowledge/ memories	• weighing up possibilities and risks • dealing with complex ideas and outcomes • planning and prioritising actions

The length of time people experience these effects will vary greatly. They may impair people for just a few hours or up to several months or years depending on the person, the event and many other factors. The longer people are under intense stress and uncertainty, the more likely they are to experience psychological challenges related to taking in and understanding information.

Early intervention of psychosocial support (such as Psychological First Aid) through helpful communication can dramatically reduce the chances of an affected person experiencing ongoing distress or mental health issues later on.

How can you overcome these barriers to communication?

When people are experiencing any of the effects just mentioned, face-to-face communication where possible can be the most effective, however it is important to back these up by other communication methods. Where face-to-face communications are not possible, the use of trusted or familiar voices to relay information will be critical. This could be through a range of different communication methods (e.g. video, social media, radio, etc.). See Section 2 – Methods of communication p.40.

Remember these key points:
- Only provide or send necessary, relevant information.
- Keep information consistent, accurate, short and sharp.
- Use clear language and uncomplicated sentences.
- Use positive or strengths-based language wherever possible, e.g. use 'survivor' or 'affected person' rather than 'victim' (see the table below).
- Do not give too much new or complicated information if the person is not able to take it all in.
- Provide information in various formats, including printed material that people can read later.
- Repeat information frequently.
- Ask people how regularly they want communications (weekly email newsletters, daily town meetings, etc.).
- Should people want more information, provide a contact point (website, hotline, contact details, social media pages) rather than providing too much information at the one time.

Strengths–based language	
What it is	**What it isn't**
Truthful	Untruthful
Showing need in a balanced way that is proportionate to circumstances	Pretending there are no problems
Using emotion proportionate to circumstances	Negative, depressing, sensationalist
Showing empathy	Showing pity or lack of respect
Demonstrating strength in adversity	Showing agencies or outsiders as saviours

Normal reactions to an abnormal situation

It is important to help survivors understand common or expectable reactions and to provide reassurance that most people recover fully from even intense stress reactions over time.[20] However, there are no rules for how long an individual or community will take to recover, and people will move through the recovery process at different paces.[21] Support should always be sought when concerned about oneself or other people in the short–term and over the longer–term (months and years into the future).

Practical challenges before, during and after emergency situations

When planning your communications strategy for a disaster recovery situation and into long–term support, keep in mind that many barriers may exist, making the job difficult. It's important that you are flexible and able to quickly change your plans if needed.

In some disasters, such as during health emergencies, or conflict, or where public safety is threatened, face–to–face and physical communications may not be an option. This may also be the case when events happen in remote regions or where resources are limited. In these instances, digital or non–physical based methods of communication (radio, post, flyers, etc.) may be needed as a way to get important information to affected communities. Care should be taken to determine avenues of communication that are used regularly by the affected community. See Section 2 – Methods of communication p.40.

Some practical challenges you may face include:

- no electricity
- no internet connection
- no printers
- no office or 'traditional' work place
- dispersed population (possibly for extended periods)
- rapidly changing information
- road blocks
- spontaneous volunteers
- lack of mapping/population figures
- destruction of infrastructure
- public transport system disrupted
- decline in personal security
- local staff injured or unable to work

- high media interest
- remaining debris/destruction
- health risks associated with exposed remains (human or animal)
- possible leadership vacuum in community
- little or no physical infrastructure to house your operations
- potential crime or looting
- little or no food outlets in area
- no radio towers or people unable to access radio
- disruption to mail, or all mailboxes destroyed
- political interest.

Utilising information conduits and trusted voices

During and after an emergency it can feel like a huge 'tap' of information has been turned on, as excessive amounts of flyers, brochures, newsletters and emails are poured onto a community and those working in the recovery and support space. This resource aims to help you plan for the challenges associated with communications in these events and to reduce the likelihood of this 'tap effect' occurring.

One way to try and reduce this chaos is to look for information conduits and trusted voices. These are key people involved in the analysis, distribution and dissemination of information to and from the community. They may be community leaders (formal or informal) or members of the community that understand their needs and are well connected to people.

Tapping into these individuals can enable you to:

- bypass (some of) the informational noise occurring around you.
- better target your communications.
- have greater confidence that the information is reaching its target.
- get better feedback about your communications.
- have a better understanding of what information is needed at what time.

Some examples of conduits or trusted voices may include:

- community leaders
- elders
- religious leaders
- case managers
- general store or post office owners
- local media
- school teachers
- sports coaches
- social media influencers
- publicans
- hairdressers
- doctors/health care professionals
- police
- social workers.

Some issues to consider when utilising conduits or trusted voices:

- Does the potential conduit want to do this? Have they been asked or are you assuming they want to do it/have capacity to do it? Are they being overwhelmed with requests to do this from your organisation/other organisations?
- Could this have a negative impact on the person you're asking to get your message out?
- What sort of support can you provide these people?
- Remember that people in these positions are not obliged to assist you, and if they do agree once, it may not be an ongoing arrangement. How can you ensure they know they can say no if they change their mind or are feeling overwhelmed?
- With conduits or trusted voices, you are effectively using influential people to disseminate information on your behalf. Put yourself in their shoes and think about how you would like information to be given to you.
- Be clear about what you want them to do with the information.
- Remember that these people can, like the community itself, be overwhelmed with too much information. Make the process as simple as possible.
- Clearly identify who the material is intended for, e.g. is it for the conduit, for other agencies, for the media, or for affected people and communities?
- If the material is to be passed on to the community, have a small abstract outlining the content so the conduit doesn't have to read the whole document.
- If emailing, think about the size of the document. Are you expecting someone to forward on a 20MB brochure? The maximum recommended size of an email document is 5MB. You should also ensure the file sent is in the correct and readable format (PDF, DOCX, etc.).
- If you don't want the content to be changed convert the file to a PDF or share the document as Read Only.
- Think about how you want the material disseminated. If you want the material physically handed out, don't just send a digital copy and expect them to be printed out (this will also mean you give up control over how the material will look once printed). Similarly, if you want the material emailed, don't give the conduit a physical copy and expect it be to scanned and emailed.

Using positive imagery, stories and language in your communications

Images, stories and the use of language are incredibly important tools for organisations working in emergency management preparedness, response and recovery. Photographs and stories of affected people or emergency operations are used extensively in fundraising, media and public information campaigns.

Don't underestimate the influence an image and language used in stories can have. A successful message or photograph can empower an individual, and build resilience in a community. The right use of these can sum up the dignity, hard work and strength of a group of people. On the other hand, poor use of language or photos that are not showing the inherent strengths of communities can exploit, objectify and present affected people as passive victims rather than active survivors.

Permission should always be attained for anyone being photographed or having their story reported.

©Australian Red Cross
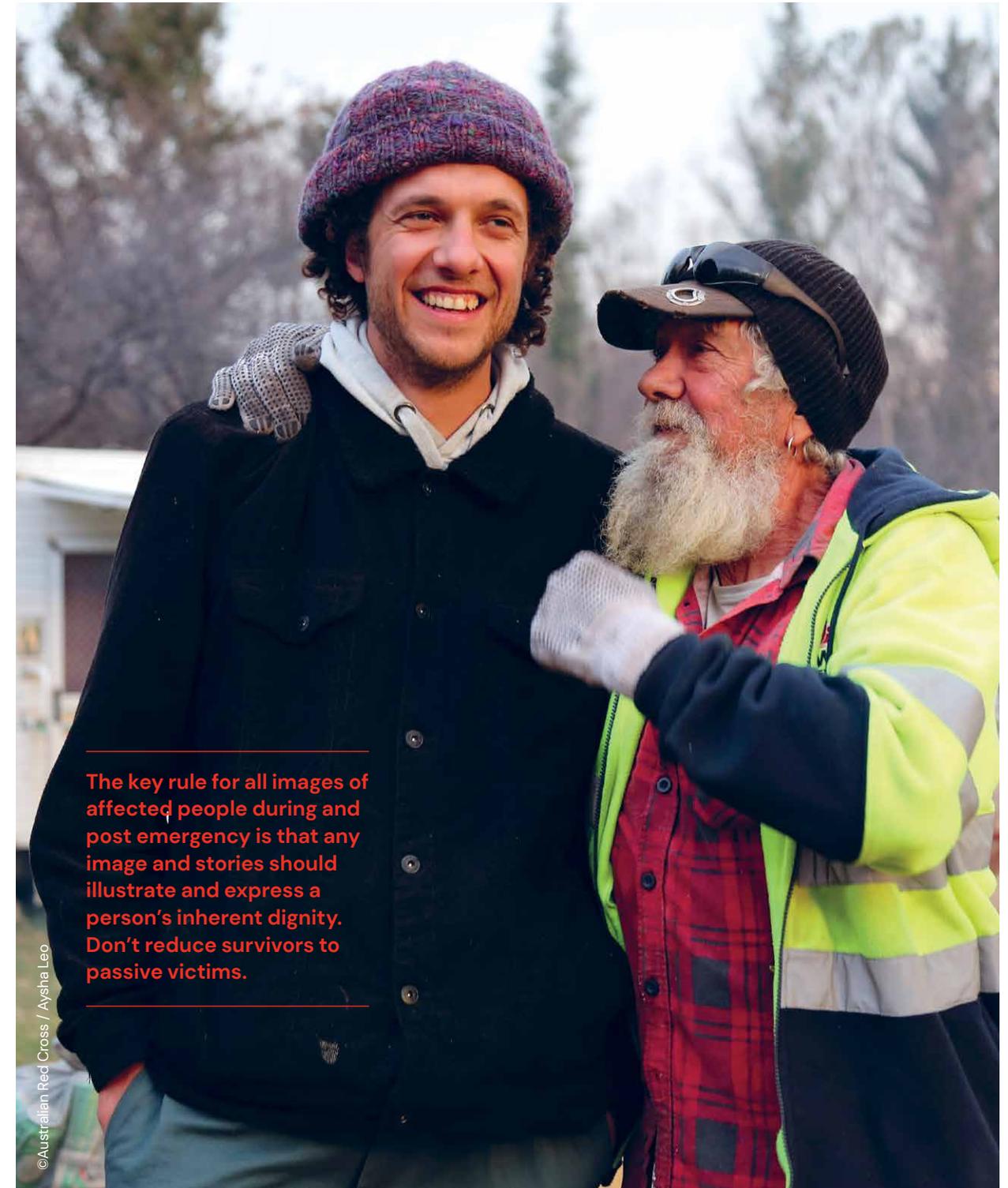
The key rule for all images of affected people during and post emergency is that any image and stories should illustrate and express a person's inherent dignity. Don't reduce survivors to passive victims.

©Australian Red Cross / Aysha Leo

28

29

Some principles to follow to ensure a strengths–based communications approach

Do no harm

Ensure that the images you use are not potentially distressing. This includes images of the hazard itself, of deceased people, of animals or humans in distress, or of people visibly upset where avoidable.

Avoid stereotypes

Photographs and reports can either challenge or reinforce stereotypes. For instance, images of children – or anyone else – holding out bowls for food reinforces the view of affected people as victims. Do all of your images of women have them holding children or cooking? Are the only non–Caucasian people in your images the recipients of assistance? Is the language used paternalistic, taking agency away from a group's ability to self–guide?

Not all emergency services workers are Caucasian males

Display the full diversity of Australian society in your imagery and stories.

Did the person want to be highlighted in a picture or story?

Ask yourself:

'Would I want my picture, or my child's picture, to be used in this way?'

'Is the final story telling the truth of the person/people being highlighted?'

'Did the person know the image was being taken of them?'

'Was there an opportunity for them to provide or refuse consent to their image being used?'

'Does the image preserve the person's dignity?'

Be aware of cultural considerations

Ensure that you have considered the different cultural needs before taking pictures or publishing stories. For some groups, taking photos and sharing them may not be appropriate. Care and permission should be taken around use of imagery that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and disclaimers should be used when displaying images or videos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (See p.90 for more information about communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.)

Don't change names or places

Don't make up children's names or use a picture and stories from one country or ethnic group to represent another.

Avoid nudity

Pictures of naked people, especially children, are never appropriate.

Show people in active roles

Communities can be remarkably resourceful and resilient during and after emergencies. Find images and promote stories of people helping their own communities, responding to crisis in positive ways.

Talking and writing about trauma, mental health, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Take a psychosocial approach to all communications. Words and images matter when communicating with people during and after emergencies. Communications need to consider the psychological and emotional challenges people may experience, as well as how people are portrayed in communications. People who undertake communications roles in emergencies can promote the recovery process for individuals and communities by portraying the emergency and the survivors in a way that is respectful and empowering.

Make sure you have an understanding of the stress and potential trauma people may have experienced, and adapt your mindset so you can tailor your language and method of communication to suit the audience.

- Consider how communications can promote the psychosocial principles of safety, calming, self-efficacy, connectedness, and hope.[22]
- Avoid talking about traumatised populations and PTSD right after an emergency.
- Promote messages about normal reactions and natural coping.

©Australian Red Cross

Building a feedback loop

Most people think of communications as the sending of information. However, this is just half the equation. Any meaningful information campaign must build in a feedback loop – that is, a mechanism to receive feedback, views, suggestions or questions from the audience.

A feedback loop has a number of advantages, such as:
- allowing insights into the particular needs and issues of the community
- enabling you to review and evaluate your communications and services
- allowing you to tailor your information to the community
- letting you find out if you are wasting your time – and if you are, enabling you to make your information more relevant in the future
- allowing you to obtain vital information about the community (status, needs, location, etc.)
- encouraging the recovery and resilience building activities to be community-led.

Building a feedback loop into your communication strategies can be difficult and time consuming. However, receiving feedback and responses from your audience will always improve your service in the longer term.

Try to consider how you can ensure feedback is received and reviewed throughout your program.

Remember that many of the people working in disaster recovery will also be personally affected by the event.

Tips for receiving feedback:

- Have contact details of a real person at your organisation – not a pre-recorded message – on all print communications.
- Take notes and gather data at all community meetings and during outreach, or other face-to-face contact.
- Incorporate feedback, monitoring, and evaluation systems from the beginning, not as an after thought.
- Record data and feedback gathered at call centres (if applicable).
- Recruit local people for recovery and support roles (if appropriate).
- Regularly talk to staff and volunteers in a range of different roles to ask if feedback systems are working.
- Don't wait for feedback to come to you – be proactive and seek it!
- Look for ways to gather feedback that puts the onus on the person who wants the information rather than users/consumers/community members.

©Australian Red Cross / Arjan Cheema

Communication needs assessment (CNA)

Prior to producing any materials, consider completing a communication needs assessment (CNA). A CNA is a simple way of organising the purpose, methods and issues of a public information campaign.

Completing a CNA is particularly useful when targeting different groups of people (for example, children and young people, or people who require cash assistance, etc.) or when creating communications in an area for the first time. It is recommended that a CNA be completed prior to conducting public information campaigns with the groups identified in this resource (see Section 3 – Inclusive communication p.80).

This is not a formal questionnaire you should complete rigorously – it is more like a series of prompts and issues to think about. It shouldn't take more than fifteen minutes to complete.

Issue	Questions you should ask yourself
Contextual	• What broader context are you trying to communicate in? • How are people going, generally speaking? • How are the recovery or support activities proceeding, generally speaking? • Are there ongoing safety/security concerns?
Stakeholder	• Who is it that you are trying to communicate with? • What special needs do they have, if any? • What assets can we build on to make communication more effective? • What are the issues/problems the stakeholders have?
Objectives	• What is it that you are trying to achieve by communicating? • What actual information are you trying to communicate to the target audience?
Method	• What method(s) of communication is best suited to the issues identified above?
Feedback	• How can we ensure that issues or views from the stakeholders are fed back to us during this information exercise?

An example CNA:

A severe cyclone has hit Cairns, killing 25 people and destroying hundreds of properties with thousands more damaged. It is three weeks after the incident; many people are still dispersed or in temporary accommodation and there is significant debris and dangerous material in the area.

Mia Wallace is a Community Development Officer in one of the seven local government areas affected by the emergency. She has been reallocated to support the council's recovery operations. Her role focuses on psychosocial support to the council's various culturally diverse communities. The CNA below focuses on the impacts faced by the Chinese population of Cairns.

Issue	Notes
Contextual	• large amounts of debris and dangerous housing in area, approx. 500 people still in temporary accommodation • response and early physical recovery proceeding without major problems • there was a lack of early psychosocial support interventions • community becoming increasingly agitated re: government financial support • electricity is fully connected in the area • free internet portals have been set up in the town centre, receiving very high usage by community

Issue	Notes
Stakeholder	Trying to communicate with those of Chinese nationality and/or those of Chinese ethnic background: • group spans all age and socio–economic categories • majority of population derives from mainland Chinese background, although some are from a Hong Kong background • significant number of older people have difficulty understanding spoken English, a higher amount have difficulty understanding written English • most speak Mandarin, some speak Cantonese only • high majority of younger people (under 40) understand spoken and written English well • the Chinese community in the area is well organised with social groups, civic organisations etc., and is generally highly interconnected • a number of institutions serve the needs of group, including social and sporting groups, advocacy organisations, language centres • there is a state–wide Chinese language newspaper that has existing distribution channels in the area • several Chinese community leaders have significant influence • three of the deceased were of Chinese background
Objectives	**Objective #1 of communication** is to let the group know of the council's presence and that they should use us as a key contact for any issues they have. **Objective #2 of communication** is to alert the group that free counselling services will be running at council offices daily for the next three months. **Objective #3 of communication** is to develop a better relationship between the Chinese community and the council, as the community has tended to be self–reliant and insular in the past.

Issue	Notes
Method	Potential methods include: • printed material translated into Mandarin/Cantonese and left at places visited by members of the Chinese community • liaise with the Chinese community • advertisement in Chinese language newspaper • target community leaders • gain approval to post information on local Chinese community social media platforms • post Chinese language information on council website • run a town hall meeting specifically addressing the needs of people of Chinese background *As the Chinese community in the LGA has existing formal and informal associations and interconnections, communications should tap into these and build upon them rather than developing new streams of communication. (Younger people who speak both English as well as Mandarin and/or Cantonese can be useful in engaging the local Chinese population, however, it is important to remember that they are likely to be impacted too and may not have the capacity to support as informal interpreters or translators)*
Feedback	• Have translation services available at council offices/call centres. • If possible, have a person fluent in Mandarin and/or Cantonese at all face-to-face activities. • Implement system to have regular updates from community leaders and conduits to gauge views/issues of the community. • Have anonymous 'suggestions box' at community meetings. • Link all communications to website, council office, or hotline if they have feedback.

©Australian Red Cross / Sharen Scott

2 Methods of communication

Community meetings

Community meetings are a vital part of communication and support community recovery and resilience, no matter what phase of an emergency you are in. Community meetings allow instant feedback from people – they can ask questions and you can spend time explaining issues rather than trying to condense information into written form.

Community meetings can also signal a turning point for people, from response to recovery. They represent an acknowledgement of what people have been through. They are an opportunity for people to reconnect and get information about one another. The informal chats and discussions before and after a meeting can be highly therapeutic and comforting for people who have been through an emergency.

Recovering from an emergency can be a very lonely and isolating process. Regular town meetings can provide a sense of social connection for people.

©Australian Red Cross / Rodney Dekker

Strengths:

- face-to-face contact is consistently identified as the most effective, efficient and trusted form of communication.
- meetings are highly effective in the early stages following a disaster.
- chance for community to meet with recovery decision makers (and express their views).
- facilitates immediate feedback loop.
- immediate answers can be given to questions.
- actively builds social cohesion.
- allows agencies to gain vital data and information about people's status and whereabouts.
- can create a sense of continuity for community.
- can give community a sense of ownership over the recovery process.
- can act as the conduit for disseminating other communications (print material etc.).
- high number of positive secondary effects (forms community meeting point, assists community bonding, allows individuals to converse with one another).
- can be done with low resource investment.

Limitations:

- speakers may not have all the answers or information people require.
- possibility for highly emotional, aggressive or distraught views to be presented without mediation.
- can potentially be traumatic for people if horror stories are told over and over again.
- requires attendees to be aware of meeting, have transport and be physically able to attend.
- generally presented in one dominant language, so discriminates against those who do not speak dominant language.
- difficult to cater information to specific people's needs.

Community meetings are best for:

- establishing early contact and information provision.
- broad information given to the community as a whole.
- enabling feedback and Q&A time.
- gathering information on the status, needs and locations of community members.
- 'checking in' with the community at different stages.

Before the meeting:

- Consider using an impartial mediator or emcee to host the meeting.
- An independent person can introduce experts or agency spokespeople and help 'close' question time or difficult conversations with a greater sense of neutrality.
- Consider whether you require microphones, audio/visual facilities, food, or any other material aid.
- Prepare a clear agenda and structure that is communicated at the beginning of the meeting. This can be projected on a screen (if available), written on a whiteboard or printed and distributed to meeting members.
- Be realistic – don't try to get through too much in a single meeting.
- Prepare a Q&A option or similar feedback facility.
- Be prepared to listen.
- Record attendees' details, needs, location and issues.
- Consider who won't be able to come at particular times of the day/evening – are you excluding people who are in paid employment? People with caring responsibilities at night?
- Where possible and relevant, consider live streaming to increase ability for people who can't make it to be included.
- Where possible and relevant, record the meeting and post it online to help ensure as many people as possible can access the information.

During the meeting:

- Start by recapping issues and updates from the last meeting.
- Set an agenda, but leave time for other business at the end.
- Leave the door open. People are less likely to open a closed door if they are late.
- Be consistent about who is in charge of the meeting.
- Make sure all face-to-face communication is active (asking questions, listening, receiving feedback) as well as passive (giving information and informing the public about what is happening).
- If you do not have answers, admit this. Take people's details and organise a time you will have the correct answer. Don't make an answer up!
- Be prepared that some people may be highly charged and emotional.
- Where possible, assign a responsible person and a completion time to each action item.
- Take notes throughout the meeting, and if possible print these notes up and hand them out at the end of the meeting, or arrange to distribute as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Don't meet and eat at the same time. It's usually better to keep food until the end of a meeting to encourage finishing on time!

After the meeting:

- Have the contact details of all the speakers easily available.
- Make a list of all follow-ups committed to, and ensure they are followed up.
- Have rooms available for private discussion after the meeting (if possible).
- If needed, consider holding more specialised meetings for groups within the community, e.g. youth, women, people with a disability, businesses.
- Reflect on who did not attend and start getting more information as to why and what you can do to accommodate these groups.

© Australian Red Cross / Jack Tran

The frequency of meetings will vary in different contexts and inevitably drop off over time. Make sure this is communicated to the community clearly and well in advance of it actually happening, so people don't feel abandoned. Particularly when funding ends, it is important the communities know when this will take place.

See the 'Issues in Recovery' record template attached to this resource for a simple method of recording the issues people raise in community meetings.

Taken and adapted from: 'Australian Council for International Development, Development Advocacy Toolkit.' And the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's 'A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)'.

Face–to–face communication

When planning communications, it is easy to focus on channels and methods such as websites, newsletters and so on. With advances in technology allowing information to be transferred almost instantly, it can also be tempting to rely on modern mediums. However, it is important to remember the importance of face–to–face communication.

Face–to–face communication consistently ranks as the most influential form of getting information across to people. Benefits include:

- an immediate response
- reassurance
- perceived trustworthiness of information
- ability to tailor information to suit individuals' needs
- a sense of participation/ownership of the recovery by affected people.

Some tips for interpersonal communication:

Words can have a powerful effect on situations. Carefully choose the terminology you use to describe people's needs. For example, describing people as 'traumatised' and 'victims' infers that they are helpless and will not recover on their own.

Choosing words such as 'affected person' and 'survivor' is far more likely to empower and help people to feel more able to help themselves.

All face–to–face communication should be active (asking questions, listening, receiving feedback) rather than passive (simply giving information and informing public about what is happening).

Avoid saying 'I know how you feel', because you don't!

Tips for listening to someone affected by an emergency:

- Remember that *how* you interact with a disaster affected person can be as important as *what* you say.
- Pay attention when people are speaking.
- Don't fidget, look away, or appear distracted.
- Use appropriate eye contact (take your cues from the other person), be mindful of cultural considerations.
- Respond clearly, at an appropriate volume (not whispering, not shouting).
- Use words people can understand (avoid jargon).
- Reflect back to people what they have been saying "so when you left the house and turned left…".
- Don't assume that the other person knows exactly what you are talking about.
- Don't talk over the other person or finish their sentences.
- Don't act as if you are doing someone a favour by talking to them.
- Don't tell your story to an affected person – this isn't about you, it's about them.

If you encounter a highly distressed person:

- Observe safe practices by being mindful of your own safety first.
- Remain calm and appear relaxed, confident and non–threatening.
- Keep the situation stable until people have time and resources to regain their normal composure (slow breathing, quiet voice).
- Don't get angry or agitated, you will just escalate the situation.
- Refer on to a more qualified person the moment you feel out of your depth or unable to assist.

Word of mouth

People are going to discuss their recovery or on-going events with their family, friends and neighbours. This will happen regardless of how well you communicate information through other channels.

Word of mouth is one of the strongest and most trusted forms of communication but it is impossible to control. However, a well-orchestrated communications plan can at least influence word of mouth communications. What you need to try to do is give people clear, concise and simple messages they can pass on to others easily, reducing the likelihood that the message is distorted.

Strengths:

- no cost
- dispersed quickly and effectively through traditional and digital social networks
- people tell their family and friends of good experiences, quality services and important updates
- trusted form of communication.

Limitations:

- people tell their family and friends of negative experiences
- messages and information easily get distorted along word of mouth 'chain'
- complicated messages are hard to convey via word of mouth
- potentially high risks to reputation
- you may have to develop new communications to combat myths or incorrect rumours that spread through word of mouth.

Word of mouth is best for:

- simple messages that can be repeated easily
- events
- calls to action.

Tips for using/influencing word of mouth:

- If done correctly, community members can become agents for your communications, disseminating them through their networks.
- Clear, consistent messaging across your communications will reduce the likelihood of messages being distorted.
- Complementing face-to-face and community meetings with printed material enables people to pass on materials to their friends or family.
- Have a single point of entry where people who hear about your service can contact you, e.g. a single phone number that is given out, or regular times your organisation will be at the relief centre, or a website address.
- Target community leaders and those with large networks to be champions of your messages, e.g. key business people, religious leaders, hairdressers, etc.
- Have information available if people want to confirm what they've heard from their friends/family.
- Simply asking people to tell their friends about something can be a very effective method of spreading information through a community.

Social media

Social media has become an important source of communications and information distribution before, during and after emergency events. There has been a significant uptake in the use of social media by both individuals and organisations in recent years. Social media has the ability to provide relevant and timely information to affected populations, as well as provides a space for people to voice their needs, concerns and capacities in emergencies. The importance of social media acting as a two-way communications tool cannot be underestimated.

While more and more communications are being undertaken through social media, remember that for every effective social media campaign there have been dozens of failed attempts to harness the medium. Thoughtfully consider whether social media is the best method of communication for your program.

Using social media channels to communicate important information (for example, counselling services, or the distribution of free water purifiers) is very different from social media communications for PR/branding/fundraising purposes. Do not combine the two.

New social media platforms are always emerging and different groups use different platforms. Consider which platform your audience uses most frequently and prioritise these in your communications plan.

Strengths:

- effective way to target and engage a wider audience, across many demographics
- good for quick updates, e.g. Twitter
- provides a forum for users to give opinions and raise issues
- some communities have pre-established social media profiles with a lot of members
- locally relevant news can travel through existing community social media groups
- potential use of GPS to send information and warnings to specific geographical areas

- allows users to interact with others experiencing similar issues
- can be accessed and used in private, and anonymously
- enables those with a physical disability and those who are socially isolated to connect with others
- relatively cheap to create online profiles for your organisation
- effective for alerting people to events
- good way of getting quick responses and thoughts from the community
- Smart phones enable people to access social media platforms remotely (assuming phone and wireless reception).

Limitations:

- requires electricity, computer access, internet access – none of which are guaranteed during sudden onset emergencies
- requires computer/reading literacy
- varying control over comments that are posted or views expressed, which may be derogatory, or stressful for people
- requires significant oversight and administration
- requires frequent updating, as people won't follow pages that aren't updated regularly
- not conducive to conveying large amounts of dense information
- may not be conducive to organisational communication guidelines (e.g. if high-level signoff is required for all external communications, this will slow the process down to unacceptable speeds).

Social media is best for:

- supplementary information (not as the sole method of communication)
- clearly identified targets, not just because it is an available option
- events or other calls to action
- specific, important information that can be communicated simply and easily.

Tips for using social media:

- Have a clear purpose and target audience in mind for the communication.
- Ensure those designing and managing the communication have a thorough understanding of the medium, its strengths, limitations and user audience.
- Consider how to use social media as a feedback loop (see p.33).
- Try to develop a real presence and build a sense of 'community'. There's more to it than just creating a profile!
- Understand the strengths and limitations of different social media platforms. Each has a different style, audience and expectation of how information is presented.
- Be careful not to think of social media as a substitute for all communications. You should ensure that information on social media can be verified on websites or other official sources.
- Understand the difference between using your organisations social media profile and using other groups/networks social media profiles to share your messages – you may not have the opportunity to moderate closed pages or feeds.
- Don't be deterred if engagement is low at the beginning, give it time to grow!

©Unsplash / Eliott.Reyna

Pamphlets/flyers/brochures/ fact sheets

Strengths:

- people are familiar with format
- easy to produce and use
- physical copy can be retained for later use
- can be produced relatively quickly
- can be produced in preparation phase (assuming information is still relevant)
- information can be discreetly and privately given to recipients
- people can read information in privacy, at a time of their choosing
- effective for directing people elsewhere (e.g. website, phone number, recovery or support centres, community meeting)
- can be localised for specific issues, themes or geographic areas
- can be dropped in letterboxes or slid under doors
- can be made available on websites
- can be dropped in strategic locations in the community
- people can pass them on to others.

Limitations:

- time delay in production if producing them post–emergency
- content is set once printed
- requires literacy
- requires access to printing facilities if being produced post–emergency
- there can be a large amount of other flyers, meaning yours is lost in 'noise'
- depending on design and printing, can be costly
- can be easily lost
- limited space on a page to convey information
- requires distribution plan and channels.

Pamphlets/flyers/brochures/fact sheets are best for:

- significant, single-issue messages
- information that will retain accuracy over time
- information that needs to be delivered/kept in private
- information that is difficult to communicate verbally.

Tips for using or updating pamphlets/flyers/brochures/ fact sheets:

- Tie materials in with your existing key messages and design to strengthen overall communications.
- Use short, sharp bursts of text rather than dense information.
- Direct readers to other more detailed resources, rather than providing all information in the pamphlet itself.
- Use visuals to break up text and guide the reader's eye.
- Have a clear and simple front cover to catch a person's attention.
- Never use distressing images.
- If information is sensitive (e.g. domestic violence relief centre information), consider producing small documents that can fit in to a person's wallet or purse.
- Have clear follow-up contact details of people in your organisation.
- Consider putting material within other resources such as newspapers or local magazines.
- Consider using different coloured paper for different versions of materials.
- Have dates and versions so people know if they have up to date information.

Print newsletters

Strengths:

- relatively cheap
- can provide affected groups with regular contact and a sense of social inclusion
- people are familiar with the format
- collates disparate information in one central location
- ability to localise issues and information
- physical copy can be retained for later date and can be read in private
- people not on an email list or without access to email can obtain copy
- can be passed on from person to person.

Limitations:

- requires literacy
- requires printing
- requires physical distribution
- content is set once printed.

Print newsletters are best for:

- collating various pieces of information rather than a single topic or story
- specific audiences (whether they be geographic or thematic)
- information that will remain correct for the life of the edition
- delivering information over a long period of time in a consistent format.

Tips for using/influencing print newsletters:

- Clearly identify the audience and purpose of the newsletter.
- Clearly date stamp all newsletters.
- Provide a basic table of contents at the top of each edition.
- Use visuals to supplement text. Remember that design and layout can be as important as the text contained within.
- Use simple, sharp, direct language.
- Never use distressing images.
- Have one person coordinating the newsletter, for overall consistency.
- Have a consistent format for the newsletter so people know which section to go to for specific information over time (unless you get feedback that the format needs to change).
- Do not cut and paste information. Rewrite specifically for the newsletter, it should have a clear 'voice'.
- Supplement serious information with 'feel-good' stories and community anecdotes if appropriate.
- Have a plan for feedback.
- Consider allowing community members to write and contribute to the newsletter to bring in the community voice.
- Plan an archive of information.
- Always provide contact details for a real person.
- Distribute newsletters from the same place at regular times.
- Provide a calendar of events in the newsletter.
- Position regular pieces and features in the same place in each edition.
- Consider printing on a different colour paper (use pastel colours, otherwise it may be too hard to read) for each edition, so people can recall the edition by colour.

Email newsletters

Strengths:

- relatively cheap
- can be easily targeted to a specific audience
- a simple and unobtrusive method of communication
- can provide affected people with regular contact and a sense of social inclusion
- assists in developing sense of community outside of physical constraints
- ability to hyperlink to other information within the email
- collates disparate information in one central location
- effective for accessing people who have left the area
- easily distributed through existing community networks or mailing lists.

Limitations:

- requires literacy and/or computer literacy
- difficulty in obtaining contact details
- requires computer access, internet access and electricity supply
- significant time investment
- software compatibility issues
- people need to know about the newsletter in advance to opt-in to its distribution
- people receive many emails, so there is a risk of newsletter being perceived as 'spam'.

Email newsletters are best for:

- collating various pieces of information rather than a single topic or story
- specific audiences (whether they be geographic or thematic)
- information that will remain correct for the life of the edition
- overcoming distance and geographical barriers when communicating with dispersed communities.

Tips for using/updating an email newsletter:

- Always include table of contents at top of newsletter. Ideally, this is hyperlinked to the text for easy navigation.
- It is better to have the newsletter in the body of the email rather than as an attachment.
- Clearly identify the audience and purpose of the newsletter.
- Use visuals to supplement text. Remember that design and layout is as important as the text itself.
- Use simple, sharp, direct language.
- Never use distressing images.
- Have one person coordinating the newsletter for overall consistency.
- Have a consistent format for the newsletter so people know which section to go to for specific information over time (unless you get feedback that the format needs to change).
- Do not cut and paste information. Rewrite specifically for the e-newsletter, it should have a 'voice'.
- Have an opt-out option for subscribers.
- Supplement serious information with 'feel-good' stories and community anecdotes if appropriate.
- Have a plan for feedback and contributing writers.
- Consider the size of files, emails with images are larger, which could make downloading information difficult for your audience.
- Save newsletter as a PDF and provide an Adobe Reader link rather than providing Microsoft Word DOC/DOCX attachments.

- Archive all your past editions.
- Always provide contact details for a real person.
- Needs to be regular, with consistent timing so people know when to expect it.
- Use a consistent subject line and sender.
- Recipients should be blind copied (bcc'd) so people can't see the other recipients' names.
- When sending to a group: some email accounts reject emails that have been sent to more than 50 people (as an anti-spam measure), so consider using a mail service like Mailchimp or having several 49-member groups if you need to.
- Unusual email addresses may be marked as spam.
- Don't mark every email as 'urgent', as this diminishes the impact of your emails that actually are urgent.

©Hello Lightbulb
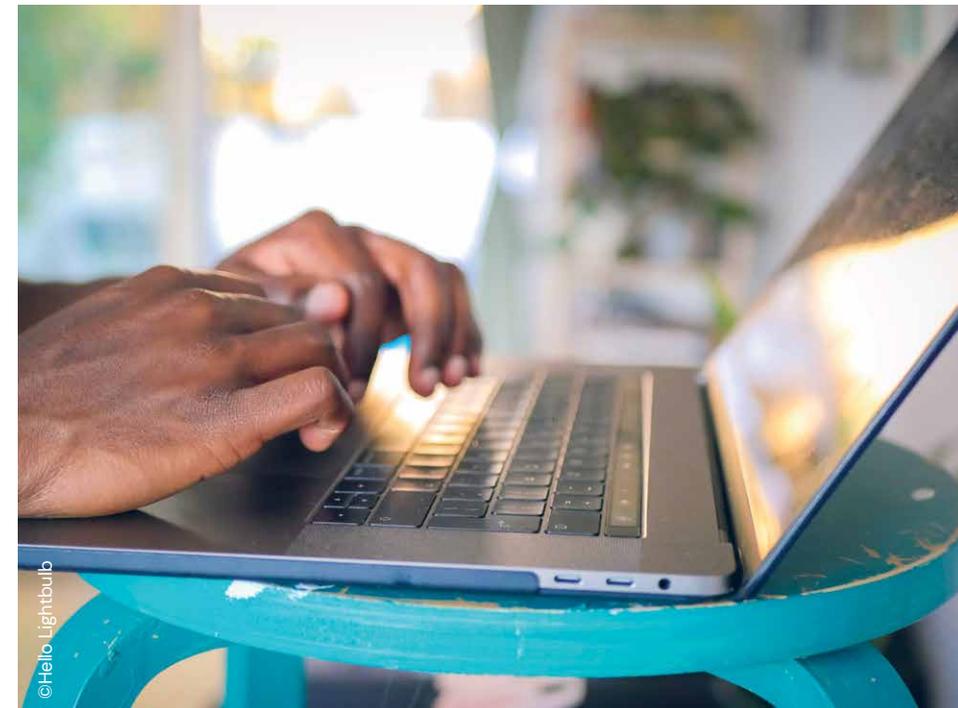
Notice boards

As a very traditional form of communication, and one that may not be particularly innovative or exciting, people supporting communities through emergencies can forget how important notice boards are. Notice boards rely on very little technology, require no electricity and can provide a public (and anonymous) voice to the community. Most recovery and support operations should have a notice board of some description in a public and prominent position. Where possible, utilise existing or popular notice boards.

Strengths:

- simple
- low cost
- can be used by a community long after the disaster has passed
- may already exist in the area and if not, can be set up quickly after an emergency
- can facilitate a local meeting place or area
- can either be locked or open to all
- allows community members to update
- allows anonymous contributions
- community members can advertise their services or businesses
- 24-hour information provision.

Limitations:

- physically permanent
- difficult to target information
- can be vandalised/graffitied
- no privacy
- can quickly become covered in unnecessary information if not regulated
- can be damaged if not made with weather resistant materials
- no control over, or knowledge of, who receives or does not receive the information.

Notice boards are best for:

- simple information that can be clearly printed in easy to read font sizes
- localised information
- broad, general information
- gaining feedback and information from the community
- directing people to other points/information sources.

Tips for using a notice board:

- Spend some time discussing the best location with the community.
- Determine how you want the notice board to operate (can anyone post notes on it or can only organisations put up notices? Who is responsible for the upkeep?).
- Consider not branding the board to increase a sense of community ownership over the board.
- Have an anonymous 'suggestions box' attached to the board.
- Have a system in place to ensure the information is updated regularly and kept up to date.

Posters/billboards

Strengths:

- prominent
- able to be established quickly and easily in early stages after sudden onset emergences and able to be utilised anytime during slow onset emergencies
- low-tech
- can reach a large audience
- stands out amongst noise of information
- 24-hour information provision (except when dark if unlit).

Limitations:

- limited information can be contained on the surface
- content is set once produced
- often requires local council or government approval for a billboard
- possibility that you will need to dismantle or relocate them
- design and building can be very expensive.

Posters/billboards are best for:

- simple information that is unlikely to change over time (e.g. counselling hotline phone number)
- the early phase following an emergency
- simple, unambiguous information
- information that suits a very broad group of people
- advertising events and meeting points
- information that needs to be communicated over a long time and/or long after the emergency.

Tips for using or updating a poster/billboard:

- Ensure your message is actually important.
- Select a central, prominent location.
- Assess literacy levels in community, consider using visuals if appropriate.
- Use posters and/or billboards as launching pads to other information rather than more thorough information which may be better suited to a flyer or booklet or website.
- Remember people may be driving, so information must be quick to view and easy to remember.
- Don't use images or information that is potentially stressful or confrontational.
- Posters and billboards use and exploit public space and the social environment as tools to convey information, so don't overdo the number of posters or billboards in the public space.

©Unsplash / Gavin Allanwood

Local newspapers

Newspapers can provide a vital method of getting information to an affected group throughout and following emergencies.

Strengths:

- existing distribution network already set up
- people usually already have a regular way to obtain the paper (either through delivery or regular pick-up)
- existing level of trust and respect within the community – potentially seen as a key source of information. It is worth investigating community perceptions of the paper prior to using it as a communication channel though.

Limitations:

- requires local paper to still be in business following a sudden onset emergency
- requires printing facilities to still be operational
- limited use for reaching people who have relocated from area as a result of the emergency
- requires literacy
- delivery systems of the paper may have been damaged in the emergency
- some papers can be biased towards one group or political view
- unless purchasing advertising space, you may not have control over what is printed.

Tips for working with local newspapers:

- When arriving in a location, investigate the local media, its role, how it has been affected by the disaster, and what its plans are for the future.
- Local newspapers may be open to giving you regular space each week. It can't hurt to ask, and having a good working relationship with the paper will assist your chances.

©Department of Defence / Corporal David Cotton

There are three key ways that information about your services, and the recovery and support process more generally can be communicated through local newspapers:

1

News

Newspapers have deadlines and space to fill on a page, so many reporters will meet their deadlines with whatever information they are able to obtain. It is very possible they will report on your services. This can occur with or without direct contact with you or your organisation's media officer.

Developing relationships with the local media will assist in minimising risks. Ensuring that correct information about your services is provided to the local media will also reduce the likelihood of incorrect information finding its way to print. Regular media releases can assist this process (see 'How to write a media release' on p.142).

Remember however, you have little to no control over what will finally be printed. See further information on 'Working with the media' on p.133.

2

Features

A feature is an in-depth report on an issue. It is possible to 'pitch' a feature to a reporter (see tips for pitching stories on p.136), but it is more common for a reporter to approach you. As features are more detailed than news stories, with journalists conducting more intensive interviews, there is less likelihood of incorrect or damaging information being reported.

However, you still have little to no control over the final piece. It is also possible that the information you would like to convey to the public (for example, the extension of free counselling services) will not be the information the newspaper is interested in printing.

3

Paid advertisements

Paid advertisements offer one of the simplest and most effective methods of getting information to a wide group of people. Also, the market of the newspaper (e.g. geographically based, or specific thematic/ ethnic group) will allow you to target your messages.

Importantly, buying advertising space gives you total control over the content (within the paper's guidelines and standards). Prices vary for advertising space, but when compared to other costs, such as designing, printing and distributing flyers, it can be a relatively cheap communication method. In addition, it may be worth investigating the possibility of getting discounts for your ads.

Visit www.newspapers.com.au for a full list of every newspaper in Australia.

Radio

Strengths:

- well-known resource
- communities often have pre-existing local radio stations
- cheap
- relatively low tech
- there are often stations or shows catering to specific groups (e.g. language, religion etc.)
- messages can travel long distances (depending on transmitter strength)
- able to take time explaining things on a radio show
- enables public participation and conversation between host, guests and audience
- can also be accessed through websites and podcasts anywhere at any time.

Limitations:

- requires station to be in working order or actively operating following emergencies
- relies on electricity to transmit
- people need radios and electricity or batteries to access
- ineffective for people with impaired hearing
- almost no ability to know who has heard the information
- radio shows or interviews are usually only presented once, meaning there is only one opportunity for people to hear the information (unless podcasted)
- challenging for those who don't understand the language messages are transmitted in.

Radio is best for:

- disseminating information early after an emergency or when significant program changes occur
- having in-depth discussions or Q&A sessions on a topic
- overcoming distance and spatial barriers
- casting a wide net where you want people to register with you (for example when communicating with dispersed people).

Tips for using radio:

- Forge relationships with presenters on radio shows to gain access to airtime through interviews.
- See if you can obtain or purchase space on a radio channel.
- Is there a community station on which you could design your own weekly radio show?
- If running your own show, promote it through your other communications.
- Consider broadcasting events like community meetings via local radio (ensure you tell the people in the audience though).
- Can you afford to buy and hand out radios in the community?

'I can't see, so when my radio was destroyed in the cyclone, I felt very isolated. Now that I have a radio, I feel like I can see!'[23]

– a blind monk in Burma who received a radio after Cyclone Nargis.

Mobile text and group messages

Strengths:
- high mobile phone usage in Australia
- direct access to people everywhere (assuming network connectivity)
- information can be saved for later
- private
- effective for reaching people who have left the area
- can tailor information for specific groups.

Limitations:
- requires electricity and phone reception
- may not suit older people, non-English speakers and people with cognitive/learning impairments
- people will often forget phone chargers if they had to leave the house quickly during sudden onset emergencies
- difficulty getting people's phone numbers
- you can't be sure that people have received messages on some platforms
- there may be privacy legislation or issues regarding contacting people in your state or area
- can be expensive, depending on the technology you are using, and the number of messages you are sending.

Mobile text and group messages are best for:
- notifying people of events/meetings/important program updates (e.g. grant deadlines)
- alerting people to new information
- directing people to more detailed sources of information (e.g. websites).

Tips for using mobile text and group messages:
- Be concise with messages.
- Use an opt-in system and enable people to opt-out.
- Don't bombard people with constant messages.
- Don't assume all people have smart phones.
- Only send messages when it is important.
- Have a very clear, simple message.
- When using group texts, only share messages relevant to the groups purpose.
- Include in the message a suggestion to pass the information on to others. e.g. 'please share'.

Websites

Websites have become a go-to for many when looking to access the latest and most important information regarding most topics. The same is true for those who seek vital information during emergencies. Most organisations have official websites that can be updated with the latest information when needed, however some local groups or organisations (particularly those that form in the wake of an event) may not have an existing website. Thankfully, it has become easier to set up websites using online website building platforms such as Squarespace, WIX, etc. See p.146 for more information about creating websites and blogs.

Strengths:

- often viewed as a basic requirement of credibility by the general public
- can be accessed on mobile devices
- people view websites as a primary method of obtaining information
- young people in particular have high web literacy and view the web as a primary source of information
- can effectively deliver information to the broad general public
- easily updated with the most current information
- cheap to update (when existing infrastructure and software is in place)
- can categorise and section off large amounts of information and data for ease of reading
- information can be archived so it will be available at a later date
- forums can be created to allow people to connect with others in a real-time environment
- allows you to track traffic to your website and interest in the information being displayed.

Limitations:

- can be difficult to relay and retain quality information from the field
- requires web and reading literacy. May not be appropriate for the visually impaired, people with a cognitive disability, or those who are injured or non-English speakers
- requires extensive infrastructure to be in place: computers, electricity, phone line/mobile broadband
- layout and web structure can be difficult to navigate for affected people
- information is not private
- expectations that web is real-time or regularly updated
- can be expensive to develop
- high upkeep/moderating requirements.

Websites are best for:

- almost all communications
- the detailed information people are looking for after receiving 'launching pad' communications (text messages, billboards, etc.)
- broad information that is relevant to a broad group of stakeholders
- information that requires frequent updating
- information that requires linking to other organisations or sources.

Tips for using or updating a website:

- If you can't update it frequently, ensure the information is relevant and unlikely to change.
- Date stamp all information where relevant so people know which information is newest.
- Ensure navigation throughout website is clear and simple.
- Use images to break up large amounts of text.
- Establish a feedback option for community members to send through any questions, queries or issues they have.
- Keep a record of the issues that are being raised via the website feedback option; this can inform how well your information campaign is going.
- Remember people view websites at any time, so don't say 'in three days time', but rather state the relevant days/dates.
- Ensure simple, easy to read messages are used and that the colours promote readability.
- Promote the website through your other means of communication.
- Time and resource–permitting, consider having a 'draft site' produced pre–disaster which is ready to rollout in the event of sudden onset emergencies.
- Don't display detailed information on the front page, just have the most important titles and people can click to see the detailed information they require.
- Ensure the website address is easy to remember and searchable in search engines.
- Ensure accessibility options on the website are available (ie. text–to–speech, translation options, or hotlines to provide translation and interpretation support).

"Websites are great for giving information, but not good at receiving feedback unless you build it in and take it seriously."

– Public relations and communications academic

© Australian Red Cross / ©Dilini Perera

Blogs

What is a blog?

A blog (short for web-log) is a simple website that is easily updated with information. Blogs are often used by individuals or organisations as a simple method of getting their views into the public domain. Updates are posted on the blog in a time-based hierarchy, meaning it is very easy to see the latest updates to a blog.

Another reason blogs can be beneficial is that they are free to set up. With a computer, internet connection and just a basic level of computer literacy, you can be posting information accessible to the whole world in under 30 minutes!

Certain blog platforms can also enable users to upgrade their page to look more like websites. This can be a useful option as the function and reach of your services adapt and grow over time.

Strengths:

- cheap to establish (assuming existing infrastructure, equipment and expertise is in place)
- can give a personal 'face' to an organisation. For example, a CEO or community recovery officials can discuss things in an informal manner more easily than through official communications
- a community owned and driven blog can develop community resilience and provide a simple outlet for issues to be aired
- you can choose your own web address
- can link to other organisations and information
- blogs provide a simpler and more digestible format than most organisations' official websites
- counters allow you to see how many people are visiting your blog.

Limitations:

- may not be viewed as professional or trustworthy compared to an organisation's official website
- some blogs are difficult to find through search engines.

Tips for using or updating a blog:

- Have clear and simple entry titles so people can search for them later.
- Keep your entries short, sharp and to the point. Long, rambling entries will turn people off very quickly.
- Don't fall into self-indulgence.
- Avoid the 'soap-box' effect where people use blogs to pontificate their views about this, that and everything. Stick to the original purpose of the blog and avoid going off track.
- Keep a simple layout.
- Have regular updates and ensure all information is current.
- Use images to break up the text.
- Have an archive of previous entries that people can view.
- Have a simple and clear title and address for the blog.
- Choose a tone for the blog and stick to it. Is it humourous and lighthearted, or serious?

Further information about setting up a blog is available on p.146.

Video

(via websites, blogs, YouTube, DVD, social media platforms)

Strengths:

- video and imagery can tell a complex story in a short amount of time
- images, talking or music can be used to convey points and emotion
- relatively low cost phones or digital cameras allow people to record high quality videos
- allows your message to stand out from the crowd
- YouTube (or other streaming services) can be viewed by anyone with an internet connection
- can be embedded in emails and websites.

Limitations:

- recording, editing and computer infrastructure required to produce video
- potentially high cost of video production if done professionally
- bandwidth issues associated with viewing/downloading/uploading videos
- not overly conducive to two-way communication
- need web facilities and computer literacy to view video
- bad or boring videos can turn people off.

Video is best for:

- providing information to those who cannot physically be in face-to-face meetings
- information that you are comfortable being viewed by a large number of people
- instructional information or other times visual displays are important
- allowing people to tell their own stories
- enables people to prompt action based on emotion.

©Unsplash / Johan Mouchet

Tips for using video:

- Keep videos short and sharp.
- The information contained in the video is the key; don't overly rely on slick editing or graphics.
- Investigate web connections and speeds in the area to make sure the community can access any videos you produce.
- Only use footage if it actually improves the communication of information, don't use it simply because you can.
- Real or 'human' stories can be highly affective. Be sensitive and respectful of people's experiences when capturing their experiences on video.

3 <u>Inclusive</u> communication

Getting the message across

To make the most of your public information campaigns in recovery, you need to know and understand your target audience.

You will send information differently if you are communicating with an entire town compared with just a few families. The same applies to the differences in circumstances and the special needs of people you are communicating with. Think about their issues and the environment they are operating in.

Those with special needs can be severely affected by an emergency. For example, over 40 percent of the people who died in the 2009 Victorian bushfires were classed as 'vulnerable' because they were aged less than 12 years or more than 70 years, or because they were suffering from an acute or chronic illness or disability.[24]

©Australian Red Cross / Marlon Dalton
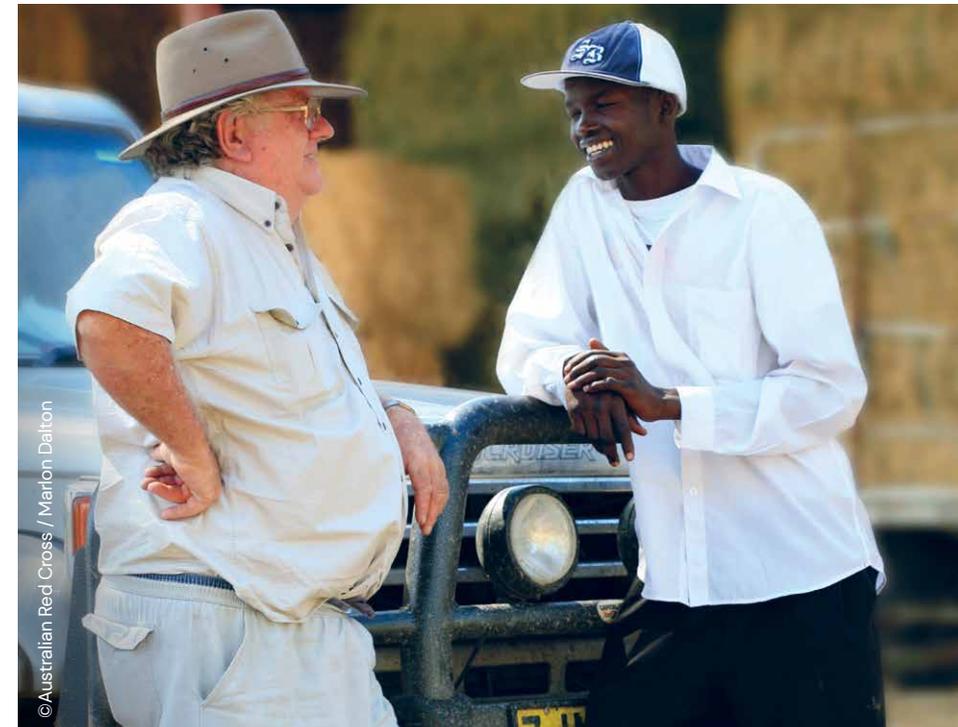
To identify a collection of people as a 'group' in the following pages is not to suggest members of this 'group' are necessarily more vulnerable or less resilient to emergencies. The purpose of the following pages is to identify that different sections of society have differing needs and characteristics that should influence how you communicate with them.

It is also important to remember that people are not defined by what group they belong to. The groups identified in the following pages are cross-cutting and can include all members of society. Many groups also have a number of intersections with other groups, meaning that while a person may be young, they may also be a person with a disability. Understanding intersectionality and the diverse nature within each of these groups will help ensure that communications are as inclusive as possible. This also means that as these groups are made of diverse individuals, what may work for some within a certain group may not work for others in the same group.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the titles provided below may not be the language or way individuals and groups prefer to be referred to as. All groups and sub-groups within them have unique preferences around language and this must be explored to ensure the best approach is taken when supporting communication needs before, during and after an emergency.

Access to information is vital at all stages of emergency management, and that information must be accessible to all in the community.

Gender in recovery

Gender awareness has not historically influenced emergency and recovery services in Australia. In many cases, the norms have focused on the perspective of men, often sidelining the voices of women or people of diverse gender and sexual identities. While Australia may not have gender inequalities as conspicuous as in other parts of the world, they are significant and increasing.[*] It is critical that a gender-sensitive lens be central in emergency management planning, and community recovery and long-term support operations. The National Gender and Emergency Management Guidelines (GEM Guidelines) is a helpful tool that provides high level and strategic guides to ensure a gender-sensitive approach is taken through the duration of an emergency cycle.

In the context of this resource, 'gender' refers to the ways in which systemic gender-based inequality and discrimination negatively impact men, women, boys, girls and trans and gender diverse people's experiences of emergencies. The impacts of gender and gender inequality differ for each of these groups and carry different levels of increased vulnerability.[25]

Be mindful that traditional gender roles have shifted over successive generations. There are more women in the workforce, including in professions that were historically male-dominated, and men beginning to take more of the primary care roles for families. Single-person households are also increasing. The predominance of women as single parents remains. Additionally, there is more recognition that gender is not binary, and it is useful to view gender as a spectrum.

Expressions of gender roles and levels of vulnerabilities are greatly influenced by the specific circumstances of a disaster (location, social norms, etc.).[26] However, some general points are worth considering and are highly relevant to the Australian context.

---

[*] "Australia ranked 50th in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index in 2021, down from 15th place in 2006 (https://www3. weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf, p.103.)"

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

Women

- Generally speaking, women have higher levels of pre-emergency disadvantage than men, which can be compounded following an emergency.[27] Examples include: less financial independence, and a greater likelihood of having experienced sexual and domestic violence.

- Women are overrepresented in care taking roles in Australia for their immediate family and extended family and in unpaid caring roles in the community (formal and informal). These responsibilities often increase after a disaster.

- In many communities, women are overrepresented in paid and unpaid community organisation roles, and in both formal and informal community networks. Their connections within a community may be broader than men's, even where women are not as highly represented in formal roles.

- Evidence demonstrates that women are at increased risk of experiencing violence after disasters.[28]

- Some researchers note that the risk of violence against women is greater in the home or temporary family housing situations, particularly those facing increased financial stress.[29]

- It has also been noted that violence against women can be prominent in emergency shelters. While this occurrence is not as prevalent in the Australian context, it is important to note as individual experiences in shelters can vary greatly.

- Women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with a mental illness following disasters. This may be especially difficult if there is reduced access to health care. It is also likely to be related to men's reluctance to seek medical or psychological help.

- There is evidence documenting issues relating to access to antenatal care, maternity care and infant and child feeding in post disaster settings. This includes a lack of planning and formal responsibility to address solutions related to nutrition and infant and young children feeding in emergencies.[30]

- Women are more likely to be single parents with custody of children than men.

- Women's under representation in formal leadership roles in emergency management must be addressed through gender equity measures. This includes addressing systemic and institutional sexism, career penalties not faced by men, and fewer role models and sponsors than men.[31] Fairer and more equitable systems need to be advocated for and created across the entire emergency management cycle.

- Women's voices in decision making before, during and after emergencies can be overlooked or drowned out, often being portrayed as victims.[32]

- There can be increased economic, social and personal pressures faced by women who identify as part of minority groups. These can include women of diverse race, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, location, and culture.

Men

- Traditional stereotypes of men can lead to expectations that they will play leadership roles within their families and communities which can impact psychological wellbeing.

- Many men can feel the failure to adhere to stereotypes of masculinity leading to unhealthy coping mechanisms, including increased alcohol and drug abuse.[33]

- Men are more likely to leave home for work due to a lack of jobs in the local area after a disaster. This is exacerbated by a continued expectation that women need to take on the role of the primary caregiver and, in some cases, forego a career to do so.

- Men are more likely to be involved in local volunteer frontline firefighting or emergency rescue groups, which can lead to physical injury, exhaustion or psychological trauma.[34]

- Men are less likely to have prior experience dealing with support agencies and counselling services and can also fear being viewed as weak for 'asking for help'.

- Men may be slower to seek assistance for stress and mental health concerns.

LGBTIQ+ Communities (people with diverse gender and sexual identities)[35]

- Existing vulnerabilities and marginalisation faced amongst LGBTIQ+ people and communities, which includes sex and gender diverse minorities, as a part of pre-disaster life are further exacerbated when surviving through emergencies.[36]

- Emergency management workforces often lack awareness and training, resulting in increased social stigma, discrimination and violence toward LGBTIQ+ communities, as well as a loss of trust and lack of engagement for many LGBTIQ+ people. [37]

- A lack of safe spaces, including evacuation centres, recovery hubs and other important public venues has meant that some LGBTIQ+ groups can only rely on their own capacities and interpersonal networks during and after emergencies.

- LGBTIQ+ people may also face further discrimination within their ethnic or cultural communities, resulting in a limited access to information, community support and representation, which may lead to their needs being overlooked through all stages of emergencies.[38]

- Some people in the LGBTIQ+ community may not feel that they can access services provided by certain organisations, including faith-based organisations, who can have exemptions under anti-discrimination legislation.

Considerations of family violence in emergencies:

- It has been well documented that family and gender-based violence increases in the wake of both sudden onset and slow onset disasters.[39,40]

- Remember, that family and gender-based violence is a crime.

- Mandatory reporting and protection mandates should be made clear in communications that touch on family and gender-based violence.

- Know people in your organisations, or connect with organisations within your community that will be able to guide you around disclosing and reporting family or gender-based violence.

- Ensure sensitivity related to family violence in your communications. For example, information about services for those affected by family violence should be small enough to fit in a purse or wallet for privacy and safety.

©Australian Red Cross / Leonie Marshall

** *"The term LGBTIQ+, used by LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, has been adopted to consider and represent many diverse gender and sexual identities in a safe, healthy and inclusive way. This also includes people and communities who identify as non-binary, asexual and bodily diverse throughout Australia. It is important to note that terminology continues to evolve as individuals and groups develop new ways of describing their identities to reflect their lived experience and authentic selves."*

Tips for thinking about gender in your services and communications:

- Take time to research and understand how gender is socially constructed and how it plays out in communities after disasters.

- In face-to-face communications, consider consulting men and women separately as they may not speak freely in front of one another.

- Use non-gender specific language in communications intended for everyone in the community.

- Think about the visuals, images and language you use. Avoid gender stereotypes, such as portraying women as victims and men as stoic and strong, or portraying women as child-carers and nurturers, and men as active in the disaster event.

- Avoid gender stereotyping in all communications and media as this can create a gulf between reality and unrealistic societal expectations, leading to a damaging view of one's self and self-worth.

- In some instances, it may be worth considering whether it's appropriate to produce direct communication resources to gender-based groups.

- Choose women as media spokespeople, including women who are trans and gender diverse, and sexual and gender diverse people.

- Seek out and provide training to workforces around the needs and capacities of people with diverse gender and sexual identities.

- Build relationships and work inclusively with people with diverse gender and sexual identities at all stages of emergency management.

- Where necessary, use distribution channels based on gender. Research your community to find targeted distribution channels for all diverse gender communities.

- What childcare facilities are available for carers? Include this information in your communications.

- Be mindful of varying gender norms when communicating with diverse religious and cultural groups.

- Ensure a diversity of experiences and voices are included in assessment teams, response and recovery planning committees, and all face-to-face communications including women, men and LGBTIQ+ people.

- Ensure that feedback is broken down by gender during collection and analysis to improve targeting of services.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- What are the specific needs of men, women, boys, girls and LGBTIQ+ groups?

- What were the conditions of vulnerability for each group prior to the emergency?

- What impact has the disaster had on the economic status of men and women and LGBTIQ+ groups?

- What are the roles taken on by men and women after the emergency? Are any of these non-traditional?

- Are planning and consultation activities reaching all groups equally?

- What are the employment and work patterns of various gender groups?

- Is there a potential for partnering with gender-based organisations such as women's groups, mothers' associations, men's activity clubs or gender diverse youth support groups?

- Are there any cultural practices which may adversely affect one group?

Following the 2011 Queensland floods, it was found that 44.4 percent of transgender respondents and 34.6 percent of people who identify as lesbian, gay and bisexual had experienced harassment prior to the disaster in their daily lives. Prior fears of harassment and/or abuse among gender and sexual minorities was exacerbated following the 2011 floods, with 43 percent of LGBT respondents expressing a fear of all public places (e.g. streets, parks, evacuation centres) at all times during and after the disaster.[41]

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Emergencies and disasters occur across all of Australia, meaning no community is immune to their impacts. It is therefore necessary to implement recovery and support plans to address the unique needs of all groups impacted, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in urban, regional, rural and remote areas.

While emergencies can often have a greater impact in marginalised communities, it is important to recognise the strengths inherent within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, there are disproportionately higher levels of vulnerability across most social, economic and health indicators. However, vulnerability is not an inherent characteristic of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – it instead stems from systemic inequities. In fact, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can be characterised as possessing close social bonds, shared understandings of history and the ability to withstand extreme events and adjust to new norms. These are often strengths when supporting communities before, during and after emergencies.

This resource is not an authority on the needs and issues affecting the diverse groups that make up the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Within Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups are diverse and a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate. It is advised that all those responsible for communications, consult with Traditional Custodians, Elders, the broader community, and local community service organisations. This assists with identifying the needs specific to the location and groups being supported. It is also important when doing so, to recognise and place the strengths of communities at the centre when interacting or reaching out.

To assist you, here are some general considerations to follow when conducting public information campaigns with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities.

©Australian Red Cross / Aysha Leo

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- Existing strengths and social capital inherent within communities can mean recovery may begin to take place naturally.[42]
- Existing levels of disadvantage (social infrastructure, health services, unemployment) may be exacerbated by an emergency.
- Experiences of discrimination prior to and during disaster events.[43]
- Challenges associated with working in remote areas (long travel times, limited supplies, lack of internet access, etc.).
- Damage or loss of land and Country as well as areas of cultural significance can influence the path to recovery.
- Potential mistrust of institutional services (government, NGOs, welfare services, etc.).
- Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are multilingual and English may not be their first language.
- Use common language appropriate to the community.

Use of language:

- Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities speak many languages, and English may not always be their first language or the preferred language of communication. It is important to know the local languages used and find interpreters who can effectively translate and communicate messages.

- Be aware that communities have diverse ways of communicating. It is important to take the initiative to acknowledge, respect and embrace local dialogue – including pronunciation, slang and grammatical differences.

- Body language varies from community to community. Observe other communication styles and familiarise yourself with local knowledge for things such as eye contact or body contact (shaking hands etc.).

- Silence is a common and important communication style in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It does not mean a misunderstanding of a topic or issue. It can mean many things depending on the community, including respect, contemplation or disagreement. Allow time and space for silent moments within conversations and discussions.

- There are over 250 unique Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clan groups in Australia. Some people prefer to be referred to as their traditional identity. It is important to ask communities about their preference first. The terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and 'Indigenous' can both be used (e.g. 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' and 'Indigenous peoples'). However, because 'Indigenous' is not specific, some communities may prefer the full term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'.[44] This also highlights the fact that Torres Strait Islander peoples are a culturally distinct group from Australian Aboriginal peoples.

- Use the term 'peoples' rather than 'people', as it has a particular meaning in international law and relates to the right of self–determination as defined by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[45]

- Abbreviations such as ATSI, TI, and TSI should never be used.

Tips for working and communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

- Know the Traditional Custodians when engaging in and working with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities.

- Respect for and of the community is highly important. Elders and community leaders should be approached prior to any service delivery. Elders in particular are holders of community knowledge and are well respected within communities. Elders are to be treated with respect and invited to provide input into recovery and resilience planning.

- Consider the locality of the communities you are connecting with and understand whether, and how, they are accessing services and information. It can be important to connect with these existing service providers or information networks to provide recovery and support messages.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have resilience to adversity and disaster. Use strengths–based approaches in your communications when supporting communities (refer to p.24 on Strengths–based communications).

- Remember, every community has their own local cultural protocols. It is important to understand these as they should direct the communication approaches you take.

- Taking your time to understand the community, developing relationships and earning their respect, builds trust. The community will more likely value your commitment and contribution if you consider this approach.

- Where possible, recruit local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to your respective organisation or agency and contract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.

- Use the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting and media sector to help deliver culturally appropriate news, information and voice.[46]

- Use and display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imagery and visual material where possible.

- Consider using examples of disasters from Dreamtime stories in your communications.

- Only use art material, images and traditional stories if you have the permission of the community.
- The use of pictures, maps and/or diagrams may be useful where English is not the chosen language.
- Plan what you will need logistically, as it may be hard to resupply in remote areas.
- Create opportunities to encourage continuous feedback from community members.
- Word of mouth is especially important in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- Use clear, straightforward language. Do not use jargon.
- Recognise and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may follow a kinship family structure. Consider the role and influence of grandparents, extended family, and close community. This is vital to your communication approach.
- Cultural protocols, customs, and practices are performed by separate gender roles within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Men's and/or Women's Business vary between communities and relate to matters like health, wellbeing, maintenance of culturally significant sites and other ceremonial matters. Consider gender roles in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities during your discussions.[47]
- Acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural sensitivities when using images or referencing those deceased. Always ensure you have permission from their family and include a warning/disclaimer in your material. It is recommended that publications, video, photos, websites, etc. carry the following disclaimer in a prominent position:

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication (website/film etc) may contain the names and images (and voices if there's audio) of deceased people."[48]

For more information on communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and peoples see the Prime Minister and Cabinet's *Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Audiences*. You can also refer to your Local and State Government for information around local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the State and National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, and other community-led and community-based organisations working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Much of the above information was adapted from a range of sources, including the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Islander Audiences, and in consultation with the Australian Red Cross First Nations Recovery Group.

© Australian Red Cross / Dilini Perera

©Australian Red Cross / Louise M Cooper

Children

(infant, preschool and primary school)

Given the increased frequency and severity of disasters, children are being exposed at higher rates than ever before. From the summer of 2019–20, 2 in 5 children and young people were personally impacted by bushfires, 3 in 10 were impacted by drought and almost 25% were impacted by floods across NSW bushfire affected communities.[49]

When children and young people are caught up in an emergency, they, like adults, can become very confused and frightened. This may last beyond the actual event and in some cases, may be exacerbated through prolonged and compounding emergencies. To help them start to settle and eventually recover, children need to understand what is going on around them and understand what is happening to themselves and their families, both now and into the future.

The anxiety and stress which comes from being uninformed and 'in the dark' not only undermines the child or young person's immediate recovery from the experience, but it may also prolong the distress and increase the likelihood of problems later on. Children may also be susceptible to the long-term impacts of slow onset emergencies as these often disrupt normal life.

Each child has their own way of processing information. This will depend on a number of factors:

- the age of the child and the communication patterns of that stage
- their personal style (for example they may be quiet, physical, chatty etc.)
- their own particular preferences, such as conversation, play, drawing etc.
- their relationship with parents, caregivers, trusted adult figures, as well as their support systems such as friends
- the impact of the emergency on their functioning (for example, shocked and numbed, hyper-aroused and hyperactive, tense, withdrawn, distrustful etc.)
- the impact of the emergency on their lives and daily routine (school or day-care closures, inability to see friends and family, closure of play spaces and safe spaces, etc.)

Issues to consider in children's recovery and support:

Children:

- have limited life experience dealing with stressful situations, therefore they have less coping experience.
- are influenced by their parent's or carer's moods, reactions (including both verbal and non–verbal), communication style and how well their parents or carers are coping in the situation.
- have varying verbal, reading and literacy levels.
- have varying levels of independence depending on their age and the impact on their circumstances.
- may have some understanding of the issues, but may be unable to communicate their feelings verbally.
- have limited ability to identify resources they need and to access them independently.
- are reliant on family member networks to access information and resources.
- rely on parents and carers for access to most information and services.
- may live in separated households, with parents/carers having different parenting or communication styles.
- may no long be able to attend places where they sought comfort, and in cases of single–parent households, children may not be able to see their other parent during times of emergenc.

Tips for working or communicating with children:

- Don't wait for information to be requested, be proactive.
- Information <u>about</u> children should be tailored to parents or carers; information <u>for</u> children should be tailored to the children themselves.
- Create a dialogue with children, it is important that they have opportunities to ask questions and take part in conversations and play which enable them to express their thoughts, feelings and concerns.
- Giving children non–factual information or fictional stories about what is happening won't help them in the long term.

- Children communicate in many ways other than language. Using action, animation and images in communications is a useful way of transferring information to children, particularly to preschool and early primary age.
- Information and visuals should be non–threatening, calming, reassuring and factual.
- Use play situations or games to get information across.
- Remember to recognise the agency and strength that children possess to cope with and bounce back from disruptions and uncertain times in their lives.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- Did the event happen during school hours?
- How have children's lives changed since or during the emergency?
- What are the age and gender groups of the children you're communicating with?
- How are parents or carers coping? What supports do they need to assist them to communicate with their children?
- What disruptions to regular routines are still happening?
- How are you gathering feedback from children?

Because children can have a limited understanding of the 'big picture' of events, it is important that they are protected from adult conversations which might be one–sided (telephone), complex (services and agencies), or confusing (friends and family) and repeated imagery in media. In these situations, it is easy for children and adolescents to pick up incorrect information or get a distorted understanding about what is happening. As a result, the situation as they see it can quickly become a lot worse than it really is.

Young people

(12–25 years)

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

Young people:

- may be hesitant about letting people know how they are feeling of whether they are struggling.
- don't always have a platform in which their voice can be heard.
- can be hindered in both social and academic pursuits by disruptions or physical damage.
- may lack life experience in dealing with emotions and social upheaval.
- may have a reduced ability to access resources such as transport and independent finances.
- may have few formal social networks, especially if they have left formal education.
- are heavily reliant on family and peer networks for information.
- receive large amounts of information electronically, so the disruption to electricity and equipment may impact young people even more severely.
- use social media or other online platforms to get their information, which may not always be from reliable or verified sources. Generally find puberty and teenage years challenging. An emergency can compound this.
- have varying verbal and written literacy levels.

©Australian Red Cross / Conor Ashleigh

Remember to:

- Be proactive! Don't wait for young people to identify or present with issues.
- Be honest, straightforward and understanding.
- Consult with your audience! Communications driven by young people will have a greater likelihood of reaching its target and being effective.
- Recognise young people's individualism and their need to be recognised as people who are in control of their wants and needs. Their voice matters!
- Consider using communication formats that can be shared, such as printed or online material. Peer-to-peer communication is very important for young people, so published material will reduce the chances of incorrect information being shared.
- Find ways to get feedback from young people.
- Avoid grouping young people. There are many ways young people may be different from each other.

Don't:

- be patronising or paternalistic in your messaging, this will cause young people to turn off.
- talk down to young people or attempt to use slang or colloquial language you may not fully understand. This will not make your communication more effective.
- assume that all the information you give to parents will be passed on to young people.

Research undertaken by UNICEF Australia and Royal Far West following the 2019–20 Australian bushfire season found that children and young people are some of the most susceptible groups when it comes to the impact of disasters. A key recommendation from the research highlights the need for the voice of children and young people to be elevated at all phases of emergencies and by all stakeholder groups – from Government to locally led recovery and Emergency Management committees. One young person highlighted "most of the time young people don't speak up…they don't really listen to us in the community because we are young."[50]
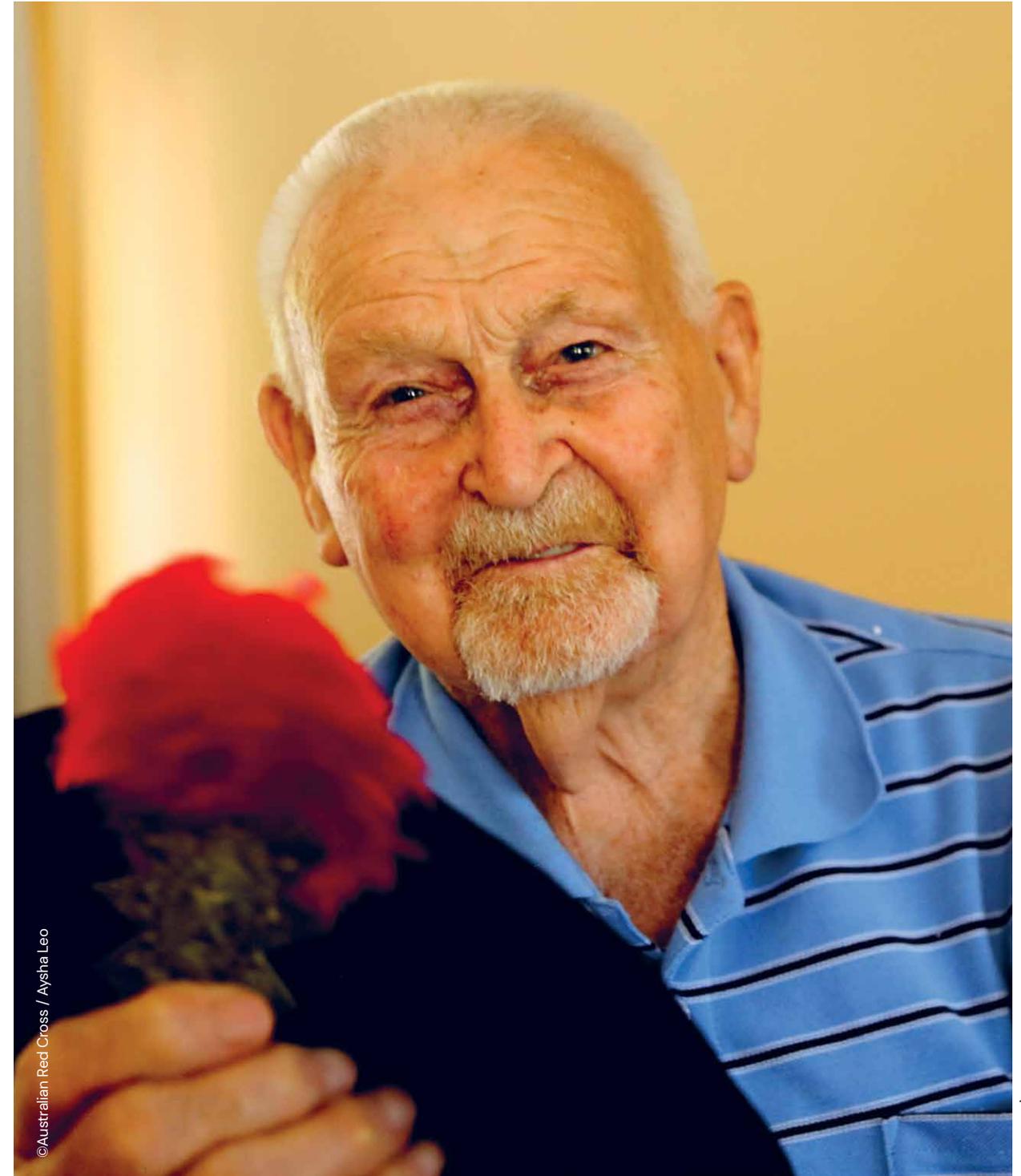
Older people

The role of older people within the Australian community during emergencies is generally not well understood or engaged in, nor has there been much research to identify the capacities and needs of older Australians.[51] With people living longer, women living longer than men, and the shift to helping people stay in their own homes longer, there are significant numbers of single–person households over the age of 65. Families tend to be more widely dispersed, reducing networks and support. As health issues increase and mobility declines, isolation can occur. The community networks for older people may also weaken as friends and siblings pass on. Finally, the exponential rise and use of technology to communicate information and provide services means some older people who are not technologically literate may find it difficult to access important support tools.

Because of this, there is a common assumption that older people are highly vulnerable. In some ways they may be – but they can also be highly resilient as life experience has developed strong coping skills, particularly dealing with disruption or shortages. They may also have experience dealing with disasters. To ensure older people are able to draw on their strengths, it is essential that communication and information before, during and after emergencies is accessible and relevant.[52]

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- In many cultures respect for elders is paramount, e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or Pacific Islander communities. These people are the key conduits, experts and influential personnel in the community.
- Mobility can be an issue for older people.
- Those on a pension may have restricted economic freedom.
- Older people often require daily medication and other aids, which an emergency may interrupt.
- The energy required to manage the recovery or cope during prolonged stressful events may be overwhelming for some older people.

©Australian Red Cross / Aysha Leo

- Some older people have full time carers, so consider the carer's involvement in information dissemination.
- Bereavement for older adults can also be a challenge. The loss of a life partner can be particularly distressing, as may the loss of adult children or grandchildren, where the individual didn't expect their children or grandchildren to die before them.

Tips for working or communicating with older people:

- Older people may need transport to and from community meetings and services.
- First Aid may be needed on occasion at community meetings.
- Where possible, use large print and Easy English in print communications.
- Tap into local health services and other organisations older people may be involved with (RSL, golf club, etc).
- Generally speaking, traditional modes of technology (print, radio) are more appropriate than modern modes (web, social media). However, older people are increasingly literate in web communications and mobile devices.
- Tapping into community figures and leaders that are well respected (e.g. doctors) may be effective in getting information to them.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- Do the people you are communicating with come from non-English speaking backgrounds?
- What transport options are available in the community?
- What technology is appropriate for the group?
- How do people generally access information about their community?

People with physical impairments

(including people with verbal/non-verbal communication, hearing, vision, mobility issues)

People with physical impairments can be particularly vulnerable during and after an emergency. It has been well researched that vulnerabilities created by systemic disadvantage mean that people with disabilities experience emergencies at a disproportionately high rate.[53] It should also be noted that physical impairment may be pre-existing or caused by the emergency.

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- Disability is recognised as a cross-cutting issue that should inform all areas of disaster management planning according to *The Sphere Handbook on Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities* (2018 Revised Edition).
- It is important to recognise and respect the resilience of people with physical impairments. Those with a disability are often highly independent and have overcome personal obstacles before a disaster.[54]
- 'Physical impairment' is not a defining characteristic of people. Rather, it is a cross-cutting issue that can affect any member of a community.
- It is important to think about emergencies in terms of vulnerable situations, not to think of people with physical impairments as vulnerable people.[55]
- The social networks that support people with a disability can be disrupted in an emergency.
- Challenges with mobility may impact people's ability to evacuate, in turn increasing the risk of exposure to trauma.
- Temporary accommodation may not be accessible (e.g. may lack suitable infrastructure such as ramps or rails, or be in an unsuitable location).
- If electricity or gas is off for extended periods, this may prove particularly difficult for physically impaired people, especially if aids require power or rechargeable batteries to operate.

- People with a physical disability still need to have their other communication needs met. For example, resources suitable for an elderly female with a visual impairment may not be appropriate for a young visually impaired male. Don't fall into a 'one size fits all' trap – the wide variation of conditions and abilities of people creates a need for similarly wide support in programming.
- Items that grant significant independence to people with physical impairments pre-disaster (motorised wheelchair, converted car, etc.) may have been damaged or destroyed, reducing the ability to recover to pre-disaster levels of independence.
- Special disability access routes may have been damaged or destroyed in the emergency.
- There is a general lack of emergency services information in Braille available in Australia.
- Statistically, people with a disability have a lower income than people without a disability due to systemic barriers. As a result, their financial capacity to recover may be compromised.

©Unsplash Annie Spratt

Tips for working or communicating with people with physical impairments:

- Work through existing carer or advocacy groups for people with physical impairments and tap into their communication channels.
- Include information about disability access in your communications (e.g. wheelchair access).
- Recognise that some people with a disability have carers, investigate how carers can also be included in your communication.
- Identify any Auslan interpreters in the community, or organise an interpreter agency to be present during community meetings and other gatherings in advance if required.
- When preparing written communications, have Easy English versions, large print, and audio versions prepared if possible.
- It's important to engage people who have a disability to help inform your work – be guided by people with lived experiences and organisations that work to improve the lives of people with disabilities rather than guessing what may be needed.
- Laptops may be useful for communicating with non-verbal people if they have lost their own communication device. The SMS option on a mobile phone can also be used in this fashion where suitable.
- Working with people with physical impairments illustrates the importance of using multiple mediums in communications. For example, radio advertisements are not suitable for a person who has a hearing impairment, but printed materials dropped in mailboxes are not appropriate for a person who has a vision impairment.
- Think outside the box, e.g. can you broadcast the community meeting on local radio, stream online with captions or podcast the meeting online?
- What physical aids will you require at community meetings to make sure everyone can participate? Ensure that these gatherings take place at accessible locations.
- Picture cards may be useful for people who cannot communicate verbally. Work with a service that provides accessible resources to learn more.

©Unsplash / Danny Nee

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- How were people with physical impairments affected by the emergency?
- What services and support was available before the emergency?
- How are the disruptions caused by a disaster affecting people with a physical impairment?
- What other organisations are working with people with physical impairments?
- Are there any community groups representing people with physical impairments in the area?
- What physical disabilities do the people you're working with have?
- What are the cross-cutting issues that exist?

Cognitive and learning difficulties

(including intellectual and learning disabilities, developmental disorders and acquired brain injury)

People with cognitive and/or learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable during an emergency, so it is imperative that recovery and long-term support operations work to understand capacities and needs of individuals and groups.

Communication with people with cognitive and learning difficulties may be hampered by significant restraints and challenges. The key to effective communication with people with cognitive and learning difficulties is to identify their concerns and be flexible enough to deliver messages in ways that suit their needs.

©Unsplash / Nathan Anderson

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- Unlike many physical disabilities, cognitive functions are not always apparent or easy to recognise.
- There can be a connection between physical and cognitive disabilities; a person experiencing cognitive or learning difficulties may also have a physical disability.
- During periods of long-term stress and emergencies people with disabilities are at increased risk of experiencing neglect or abuse, increasing their vulnerability.
- Mental illness issues can develop long after an emergency or be triggered by seemingly unrelated issues or events. Recognise that people's mental health can fluctuate over time and as a direct or indirect result of an event.
- There is a broad spectrum of cognitive and learning difficulties, so a 'one size fits all' approach will not be effective.
- Remember that 'access' is not only physical access. It could also include making written, tactile, or audio materials accessible to people with cognitive disabilities.
- Being around crowds and hectic situations can be distressing for some people with a cognitive disability. Community meetings may be frightening or overwhelming for someone with a cognitive disability or may not provide space for their needs or opinions to be recognised.
- It is important that people with cognitive and learning difficulties are also provided opportunities to give feedback and contribute. Consider how this already happens in your organisation or if this is a gap.

Tips for working or communicating with people with cognitive impairments:

- Work with specialist organisations where you can.
- Develop Easy English resources where possible.
- Tap into local health services, groups and networks that people with learning and cognitive difficulties interact with.
- Cognitively impaired people can be reliant on those around them. Consider targeting social networks, family and carers.
- People experiencing cognitive and learning difficulties may have literacy challenges.
- Information may need to be provided verbally. Use simplified language and avoid jargon.
- An overload of information can be confusing for an individual experiencing cognitive difficulties.
- Use pictures or colours to help with communication.
- It is important to find out if people with cognitive and learning difficulties have support workers. Support workers are aware of the specific needs and can inform you about what communication techniques will work for the person.
- Make sure that your verbal and non-verbal communications are consistent.
- People with a disability are not just their conditions. Rather than saying 'they are disabled', say 'they are a person with a disability'.[56] It is, however, important to listen to how people talk about their own disability and take advice from them directly.[57]

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- What level of impairment and what level of independence do people you are communicating with have?
- What level of social connectedness does your audience have?
- Was the impairment caused by the disaster?
- How has the person's situation changed as a result of the emergency?

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds

Broadly speaking, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) is a term used to describe people and communities within Australia whose languages, ethnic backgrounds and shared social practices differ from those of the dominant English-speaking and Anglo-Celtic culturally-affiliated majority, and who furthermore do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. CALD communities represent a significant proportion of Australia's population. In 2020, there were over 7.6 million migrants living in Australia. This was 29.8% of the population that were born overseas. One year earlier, in 2019, there were 7.5 million people born overseas. Nearly every single country from around the world was represented in Australia's population in 2020.[58]

It is widely acknowledged that ethnic minorities in countries outside their own tend to experience both greater impact and a slower recovery from disaster events when compared to majority populations. Research has shown that the factors contributing to this heightened vulnerability include poor knowledge of local hazards, limited proficiency in the majority language, past traumatic experience, social isolation, lack of support networks, unemployment, financial constraints, marginalisation, discrimination, lack of trust in emergency management authorities, and a dearth of cultural competency and culturally-appropriate services from emergency management agencies.

However, CALD communities that are vulnerable to disaster impacts in many ways can also be simultaneously resilient to them. For example, experiences in managing the emotional and financial difficulties associated with migration can help people develop tools and strategies that can also be applied to managing the impact of any type of disaster.[59]

Finally, it is important to remember that just because people are from the same culture doesn't mean they all speak the same language, or that if people speak the same language they may not be part of the same culture. It is important to recognise that cultures and languages are diverse with multiple subgroups,
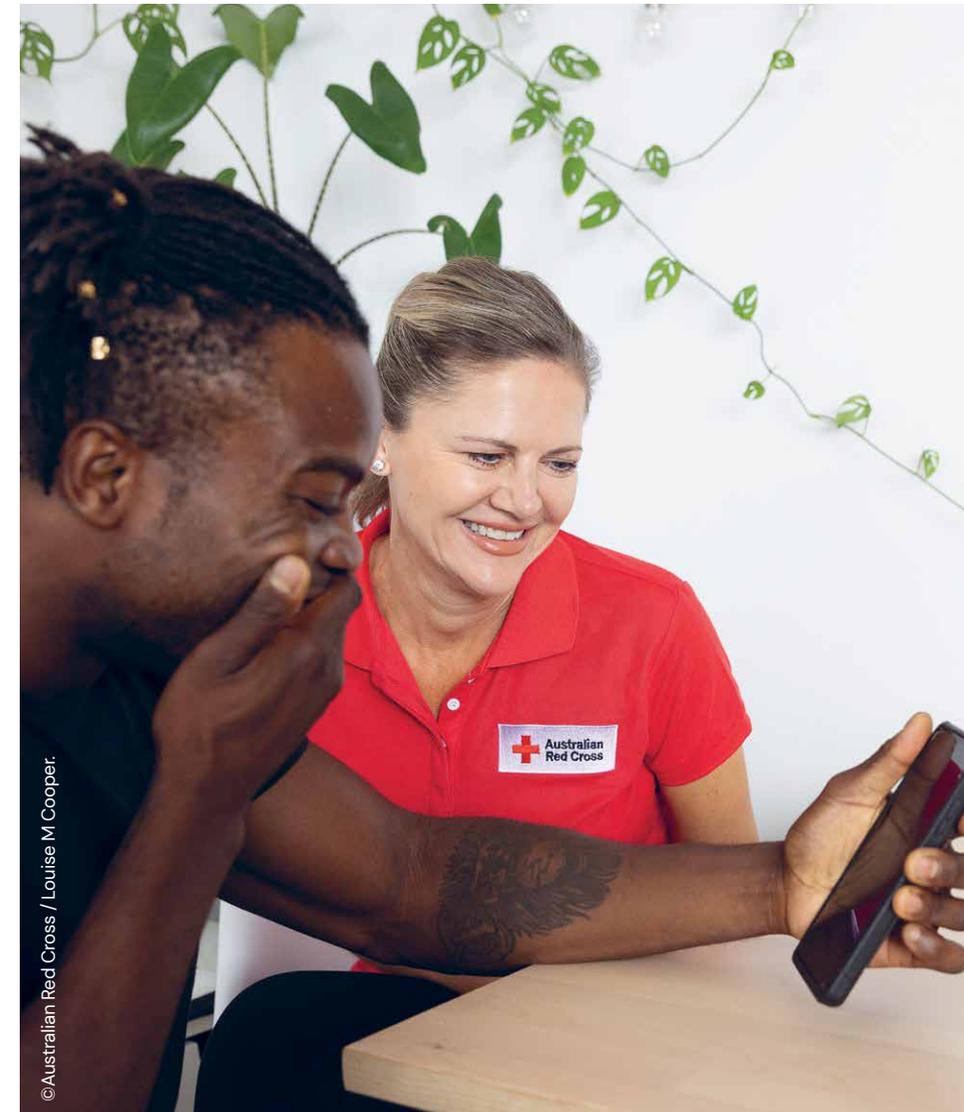
©Australian Red Cross / Louise M Cooper.

sometimes from opposing sides with a history of conflict. Remember that community leaders may not represent or have access to an entire cultural or linguistic group. Don't make assumptions about the needs of groups. Start a conversation and understand what their unique needs may be.

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- English may not be the first or even second language for some members of CALD groups. Take the time to know what language the group feels most comfortable communicating in and use interpreting services to ensure your messages are delivered in those languages. Also, consider that some cultures will favour verbal over written communication.
- Some CALD groups may feel removed, separated or marginalised by 'mainstream' society pre–emergency.
- Government services, including police and armed services, could operate very differently in the country of origin for members of the CALD community living in Australia, complicating the response, recovery and long–term support effort. It is also important to note that in some cases emergency management authority figures may be perceived as a threat, rather than a source of safety.
- Refugee and asylum seeker groups consistently rank as some of the most vulnerable people in the community across all indicators; this disadvantage is often compounded following an emergency.
- Refugee and asylum seeker groups may have experience with emergencies and/or conflict. This may increase resilience, but may also reduce coping capacities and increase stress if an emergency revives memories of a past traumatic event.
- Mental health and other support services can have pre–existing inequalities regarding access for CALD communities, which are further exacerbated during times of emergency. This is also coupled with CALD survivors' lower likelihood to access mental health services, partly due to the unsuitability of the service, amongst other reasons.
- If you are translating written information, make sure it is checked first. There have been a lot of examples where hastily translated material, or material translated using online services have been incorrect or nonsensical.
- If you are planning on translating written information, make sure that your target audience are literate in the language you are planning on translating to.

Tips for working or communicating with CALD background groups:

- Don't make assumptions based on someone's appearance.
- Don't assume religion based on nationality/ethnicity.
- Will you require interpretation or translation services? If so, what services are available in the area? It may be possible to use a member of the group who speaks English as an interpreter/translator. Be aware that they may also be affected and may need additional support if they take on this role, and also that there may be issues with confidentiality and personal information that needs to be relayed.
- Cultural groups may have formal or informal networks in the community, often with communication methods already established (e.g. social media pages, newsletters, radio shows, email lists). Try to build on these where possible.
- Generally, CALD communities often build large amounts of social capital at the local community level, and rely heavily on these networks for disaster recovery support.[60] This means that engaging extended family, friends or groups that support certain CALD communities can be a good way to provide information.
- Investigate whether there are any special considerations (food, gender, etc.) you must keep in mind when planning for information communications/ events.
- Information on cultural and linguistic diversity is often available through census data, which can help inform planning.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- What culture and ethnic background does the group come from?
- What, if any, cultural or religious practices should you consider in communications?
- How can you include members of the CALD group in your planning team?
- What intersectional issues should be considered when communicating (gender, disability, financial security, etc.)?

People who are grieving and/or bereaved

Death and loss during times of disaster present a number of challenges for the people who are bereaved. Within disasters, death can be sudden and traumatic; it may also be witnessed by family, friends or bystanders. When deaths occur within an emergency, this also increases the media scrutiny, which can be unwelcome and intrusive.

The cause and meaning of an emergency can have a strong impact on the bereaved. Historically, there was a perception that natural hazards were 'acts of god' and could not be prevented; therefore, the losses that occurred were seen as a product of fate. While some hazards may be a product of nature, there can be real or perceived system failures (e.g. in warning systems, management plans etc.) that intensify the consequences of a natural hazard. Moreover, disasters caused by natural hazards are increasing in their frequency and severity. These hazards are recognised as a direct result of climate change, which is being exacerbated by human activity. This inter-connectedness between humans and the natural environment has the potential to lead to greater feelings of distress if there is death or loss that occurs as a result. Climate anxiety, defined as anxiety related to the global climate crisis and the threat of environmental disaster, is growing amongst the general population, with significant impact amongst the youth, and is an example of such distress caused by the impacts of humans on the climate.[61]

Climate change is also disproportionately affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, who are experiencing adverse effects around the loss of land and Country.[62]

Technological disasters such as structural collapses or transport accidents can usually be attributed to a particular cause. Malevolent disasters such as shootings or terrorist acts also bring the attribution of meaning and intention into play, with the bereaved person asking why the event happened. This can be followed by intense feelings towards the perpetrators.

Reactions to death:

The initial period of shock, numbness or disbelief at the loss of a loved one usually gives way to intense separation distress or anxiety.

There is also likely to be a sense of anger, protest and abandonment. This can include anger towards the deceased for being among those who died or feelings of survivor guilt. This anger may be recognised by the bereaved person as irrational, but it is nevertheless a valid feeling. Anger is also directed towards those who may be seen as having caused the death, or been associated with the death. These reactions progressively abate and give way to a mourning period where the bereaved person focusses more on the psychological bonds with the deceased. This can include memories of the relationship and painful reminders of the absence of the person. The bereaved person will progressively accept the death, although with ongoing feelings of sadness or loss.

These latter reactions are more likely to appear during the recovery phase as the bereaved person adapts to life without the person who has died. These complex emotions of anxiety, protest, distress, sadness and anger are usually referred to as grief. It is important that people be given respect, time and space to go through the various stages of grief.

The acute distress phase usually settles in a few weeks or months after the loss, but emotions and preoccupations may occur over the first year or years that follow.

It is important to note that this process may be complicated during a health emergency such as pandemic or epidemic. During illness, people may also not necessarily be able to be with loved ones during this period. Moreover, the bereavement process can be greatly disrupted, as loved ones may be unable to participate in regular grieving processes or formal funeral rituals. This inability to be present or provide support may alter the ways people react to deaths during a health emergency.

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- People can be affected by both the traumatic stress of the emergency and by bereavement. It is important to acknowledge the experience of the individuals through public statements and demonstrations of support.

- Communities as a whole may also be affected, particularly where there are deaths of prominent individuals or young people. The impacts go beyond immediate family.

- While there may be a primary contact for each person who has died, you cannot rely on them to pass on all information to family and friends. Communications should be designed to ensure that as many people as possible in the person's circle of family and friends are reached.

- Information needs to be simple, and should be repeated on a regular basis.

- Different ethnic, cultural and religious groups have different ways of recognising, commemorating, and processing the deaths of loved ones.

- Relatives of those who have died in traumatic circumstances may not have been present, and as a result, feelings of guilt may add to and heighten the relatives' traumatic grief reactions.

- When a disaster causes a significant number of deaths, often a distinct bereaved 'community' forms. This is where people draw strength from each other's experience, and communicate with individuals to share their experience. This group will also develop strong communication links.

- In geographically based disasters such as fires and cyclones, recovery efforts are often focused upon those areas, whereas people who are bereaved may live outside the geographic area. Communication plans will need to take this into account.

- When communicating around perpetrators of terrorist or malevolent acts, the use of the perpetrator's name or organisation should be avoided if possible. The lack of notoriety and media coverage of such acts discourages the glorification of them. Research has shown that media attention can directly benefit terrorist groups by spreading their message, creating fear and recruiting followers.[63] Instead, use the media to elevate those who passed, when and if appropriate.

- People who are bereaved may have also suffered other losses, e.g. loss of pets, homes, memories or employment.

- The type of disaster may also impact upon people's reaction to the loss of a family member or friend. Natural, technological or malevolent disasters can all affect individuals in different ways.

©Australian Red Cross / Louise M Cooper.

Even within a specific group, people can process grief in very different ways. For example, within one family there can be three different grieving styles:

1 Proactive
Looking for answers, receptive to counselling, feels responsibility for holding family unit together.

2 Practical
'I will survive as long as I keep busy and focus on rebuilding the house.'

3 Denial
'If I don't talk about it, if I hide inside, eventually the pain will go away.'

Tips for working or communicating with those who are grieving and/or bereaved:

- Use a range of methods, and repeat your information at regular intervals. Be mindful that communication products may trigger reactions.
- Consult with the bereaved community about communication strategies they would prefer.
- Acknowledge people's experiences through public demonstrations of support.
- Ensure communication is broadly inclusive.
- Provide support to affected people in managing media requests.
- Understanding the reactions that people experience will help you plan your communications.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- What was the cause of death?
  - natural hazard or a direct result of the event
  - human error or action
  - preventable death, due to other circumstances.
- Were there a large number of deaths due to the emergency?
- How dispersed is the group you're communicating with?
- What are the funeral, coroners or commemorative arrangements and how do these processes affect people in the community?
- Will there be ongoing requirements for bereaved people to receive communication about the event, or have involvement in a coronial or judicial process that may go for some time?

Those with literacy and numeracy issues

As noted throughout this resource, having access to appropriate and timely information is essential for community and individual recovery. Those unable to read printed material are severely disadvantaged. With so much information produced in written form, those with low literacy skills can be unaware of basic information.

As an advanced economy, literacy is often not seen as a significant issue in Australia. However, illiteracy rates are far higher than may be expected. In 2013, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that around 14% of adults read at a primary school level or lower. This means that these readers can understand short sentences.

A further 30% of Australian adults are reported as reading at a year 10 level or below.

Clear content and plain written language help us all. The Australian Government style manual recommends that content be written at a year 7 level. Interestingly, their guidelines also indicate that people with higher literacy levels also have a preference for plain, clear language.[64]

Literacy should also be considered as a factor because of the effects of an emergency on people's cognitive abilities. Many people who experience a disaster will have trouble concentrating on written information, irrespective of their pre-disaster literacy levels. For those that have difficulties reading and writing before an emergency, these difficulties will be considerably worse in the high arousal state following a disaster. Low English literacy levels can also be present when working with groups with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Communications for CALD communities has been explored in greater detail previously in this chapter (p.112).

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- There is large range in the level of literacy people have.

- Reading and writing difficulties are far more prevalent in Australian society than many expect.

- Literacy issues are not confined solely to recently arrived migrants or CALD groups. Do not assume that a person can read or write simply because they were educated in Australia.

- Those with literacy issues may be embarrassed and unwilling to admit it.

- Lack of literacy skills may be a sign of other determinants of vulnerability. Explore what, if any, other cross-cutting vulnerabilities are present.

- Organisations can overly rely on printed material in disaster preparedness education. As a result, there is the possibility those with low literacy skills do not have the same opportunity to get information about how to prepare for emergencies.

- Organisations can also overly rely on written material during emergencies and through recovery. This means there is a higher chance that those with low literacy skills may not have the same access to information and supports available to them.

- A person with low literacy levels may have increased resilience and independence through their experience of navigating society pre disaster.

- Those with literacy issues may rely on second-hand information and word of mouth communication which may not always be reliable. Consistent, clear and repeated information, through different communication channels, can improve the accuracy of word of mouth communications reliability.

Tips for working or communicating with people with low literacy skills:

- Provide information in Easy English where possible.

- Use face-to-face communication where possible.

- Use visuals and common iconography where possible.

- Use audio channels such as radio where possible.

- If appropriate, consider if information could be printed and someone else could read it for them.

- Routinely ask people if they would like to fill in forms with a staff member or volunteer – normalise this as an option rather than singling people out.

- Privacy may be an issue if people can't read or must speak out their personal details. Have private spaces, offices or rooms at meeting points and offer private meetings after community meetings.

- YouTube or other video based websites and social media platforms are relatively simple and easy methods of transferring information across distance for those with a basic literacy level to access the web.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- Are your target audience native English speakers? If not, do you need to make any cultural considerations in your communications?

- Are there any existing services available for those with low literacy skills?

- For feedback and inquires, are non-written options available? For example, is there a phone number they can ring, or a physical place they can visit?

- What other factors and cross-cutting issues are at play?

- What are the methods you can use that don't require reading?

Existing disadvantage

The effects of an emergency vary greatly across all events, communities and individuals. However, it is generally accepted that the pre disaster vulnerabilities of a community are exacerbated after a disaster. Individuals or communities that hold existing burdens of disadvantage are particularly vulnerable after an emergency and require special consideration, and at times additional, tailored support.

This is not to say that those living in an area with a high burden of disadvantage are less resilient. However, it is important to recognise that the issues and effects of an emergency in a disadvantaged area may be different from areas without pre–existing vulnerability. Interestingly, wealthy people can sometimes be disadvantaged by their wealth, as service providers may assume they have the means to recover or support themselves, while in reality their problems may have nothing to do with financial resources. It is important to remember that financial wealth is not indicative of a person or group's capacity to cope with and recover from emergencies.

Examples of existing disadvantage can include:

- low socioeconomic levels in the community
- high unemployment
- large disparities between rich and poor
- prior exposure to traumatising events or emergencies
- low levels of access to health services
- obstacles to accessing education
- above average levels of family violence
- high levels of substance abuse
- lack of infrastructure and services
- lack of knowledge or familiarity with support services
- lack of community connectedness and social capital.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- Were any of these factors (above) present in the community prior to the emergency?
- Are any of these issues symptoms of a deeper, more systemic disadvantage?
- What services or organisations were operating in the area prior to the emergency? Have any of these been forced to leave due to the emergency?
- What experience do people have in dealing with government agencies and charities?
- Do any vulnerabilities prevent people from accessing your communications?
- Do the language or images you're using reinforce stereotypes? (avoid this).
- Do any of your communication channels discriminate against people on a low income? For example, do they require a computer or car/transport?


©Australian Red Cross / Amelia Wong

Religious groups

In the context of this resource, 'religious groups' are groups in the community where the shared trait is religious practice and affiliation. This affiliation cuts across all age, socioeconomic and cultural delineations. Care should be taken to appreciate and navigate religious customs and practices when support is being provided.

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- Don't make assumptions: not all people from India are Hindu, not all people from Ireland are Catholic, not all people from Israel are Jewish, etc.
- Gender relations and norms concerning interactions between men and women may be different from your own. There may also be rules and practices concerning physical contact between the opposite sexes.
- Some religions prohibit certain foods being eaten or certan medical treatments,, either all the time or at certain times of the year.
- Particular times of the day or year may be important and/or sacred, potentially impacting community meetings or group activities.
- A group may have customs relating to grief and bereavement different from what is familiar to you.
- There may be rules or practices relating to dress standards and codes, for both males and females.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions and enlist the help of religious associations or peak bodies to understand more about practices and norms.
- For some people, religious faith can be a great support following an emergency. For others, emergencies may cause them to question their faith, potentially increasing the psychological stress they are experiencing during recovery or prolonged events.
- Places of workshop are often used as evacuation or relief centres. This may impact community members ability to practice religious rituals.
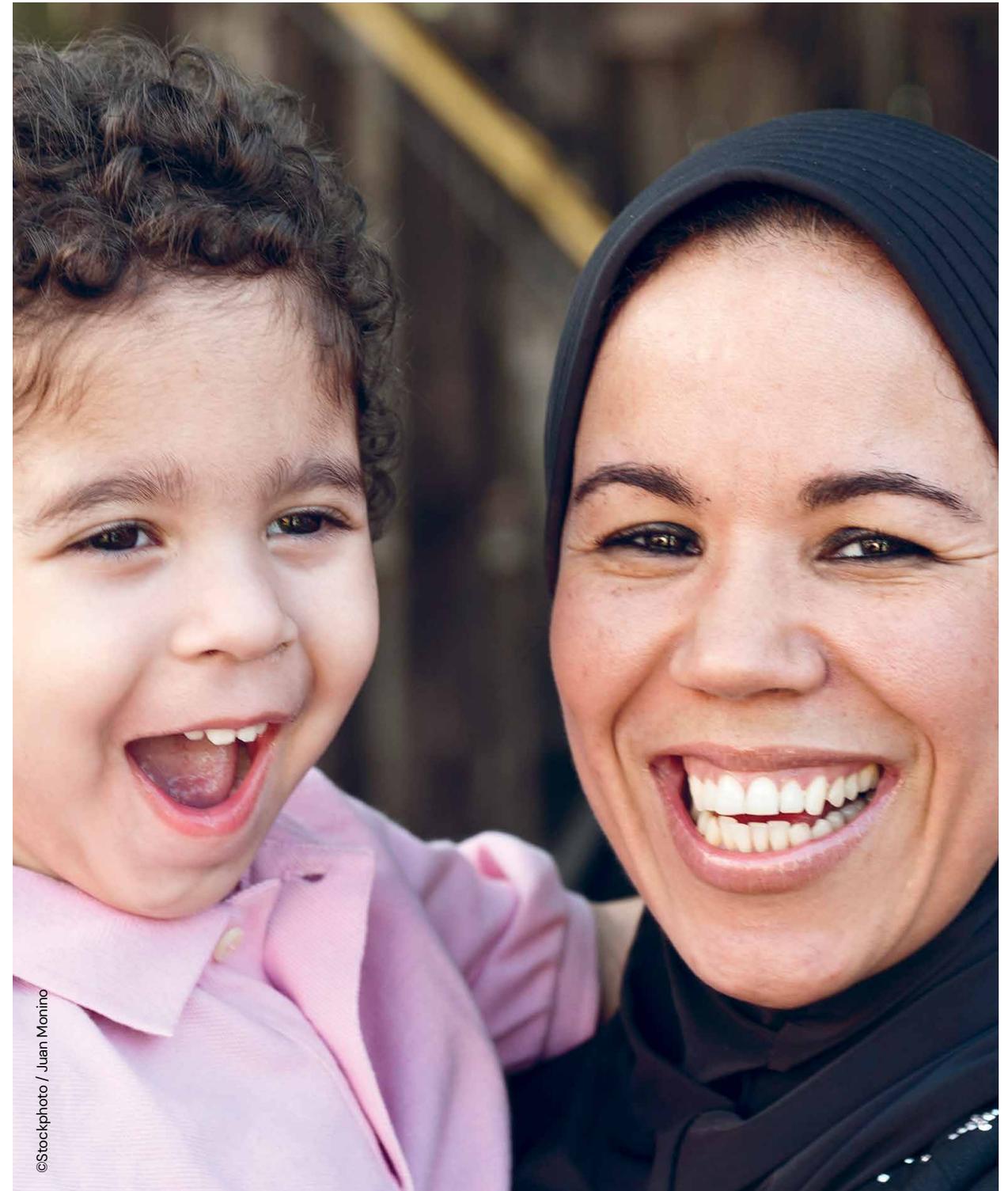
©Stockphoto / Juan Monino

Tips for working or communicating with religious groups:

- Religious groups will often have formal or informal networks in the community, often with communication methods already established (newsletters, radio shows, email lists). Try to build on these where possible.

- If there are special food requirements, are there caterers in the area that can address these special needs?

- Do communication channels specially designed for this group already exist? (For example, The Australian Jewish News newspaper, or radio shows designed for Muslim listeners).

- Don't be overly anxious about making an honest mistake regarding someone's customs. You should apologise and adapt giong forward.

- Recognise the importance of religious leaders. Investigate the possibility and appropriateness of including religious leaders in your communications or using their voice to spread emergency related messages.

- Bare in mind, there are varying degrees with which individuals and communities practice their faith. Not all Hindus are purely vegetarian and not all Muslims abstain from eating pork, for instance. It is therefore important to not make assumptions based only on someones religion.

- Investigate whether a prayer room is required for any meetings or events.

- Some members of the group may not understand English, so investigate the use of translators (see more on translators and language supports in the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities section on p.112).

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- What religion are the people you're working with?

- Were any members of the group killed or seriously harmed in the disaster?

- Does the group have any specific grieving or bereavement practices?

- Are there any community leaders you can tap into and use as conduits of information?

- What pre-existing communications channels are there catering specifically to the group?

- Are there any peak bodies, associations or advocacy groups you can work with (e.g. the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils)?

Displaced people

Getting information to and from displaced people is notoriously difficult. If people have been forced from their homes to a central location, such as a relief shelter or temporary housing village, you can send information through group mail drops or doorknock services. The key difficulty, though, is reaching those people who have left the area in a non-coordinated fashion. This may be due to destruction of housing or infrastructure caused by sudden emergency events, however, it might also be a result of long-term disasters such as drought, making livelihoods unsustainable.

The 2019/20 Australian bushfires caused tens of thousands of people to be dispersed for varying times after the emergency. For some, this displacement has been temporary, for others it has been permanent. Communicating with this dispersed and displaced population was tremendously difficult, requiring great resource investment by governments, agencies and other organisations.

In addition, affected people may not reside within the area damaged or destroyed. When the emergency or collective trauma event occurs among a dispersed population (for example a transport accident), it can be difficult to define the target population.

Issues to consider in recovery and support:

- Displacement can be temporary or permanent, depending on a person's circumstances and level of impact on individuals and households.

- Unless there is an overarching coordinating body that has kept reliable records of where people have relocated to (and is willing and able to share that information), locating people who have left the area will be extremely difficult.

- Problems such as overcrowding, violence and public health issues can break out in relief shelters and/or temporary housing villages.

Tips for working or communicating with displaced people:

Targeting people specifically is extremely difficult. The best process to follow is to cast a wide net through generalist communications for people to contact and register with you, then you can target information to their needs. This is by no means a perfect method, however, as it ignores those who don't have the capacity to register with you.

- Plan for mail and information drops at targeted locations.
- Websites pages are useful for casting a wide net, but still require people to proactively access the site.
- Consider social media, especially pre-existing Facebook pages or Twitter accounts/hashtags you may utilise, or those that are used locally. Many areas have existing pages to share information, try to tap into these as displaced populations will likely still be linked in to the region via social media.
- Investigate if you can obtain people's new addresses from other organisations or networks, although you will need to investigate privacy legislation issues.
- Broad campaigns such as radio, TV or billboards can alert people to register their details with you.
- Once you obtain people's mobile phone numbers, SMS can overcome issues of distance.
- Word of mouth can be very useful, as people will keep in contact with their friends and family who have left the area. Proactively ask people to pass on information to others, but keep the key messages simple to avoid misinformation being spread.
- Consider holding community events that may encourage people who are displaced or have relocated to return as it may be a way to connect and provide information about support available.

When conducting a Communication Needs Assessment (CNA), consider:

- Why did people leave their homes?
- Are there other affected people in the area the displaced people are now in?
- What other services have they accessed since the disaster?
- What recovery services are available to access outside the affected area?
- How long have they been displaced?
- What sort of housing are they living in now?

©Australian Red Cross / Stephen McIlvenna

4 <u>Additional resources</u>

Working with the media

Managing interactions with the media can be a stressful experience, particularly through difficult periods like emergencies, and especially if you have no training in working with the media. However, try to remember that journalists have a job to do and provide an important service. Forging relationships or creating partnerships working with the media in any emergency context can be a beneficial exercise for you and the community.

Emergencies will always elicit media interest; however, the size and intensity of this interest will vary.

When working with the media, an important point to remember is that all journalists have deadlines and space to fill on a page or TV report. The way you handle the media can greatly influence how positive or negative a report can be. How well prepared you are will affect your media experience and, at times, the sentiment of a story.

'Feed it or it will bite.'
– Professional media liaison manager

General tips:

- Be prepared. Develop media plans and train staff when appropriate.
- For organisations, create rules about who will speak to the media. Reinforce these rules in meetings to ensure everybody understands them.
- Be aware of media arrangements under emergency management plans. You can do this by searching for your State or Territory's Emergency Management Plan or contacting your Local Disaster Management Committee/Group.
- To avoid confusion in the public, limit your comments to what is known, i.e. what your agency is actually doing. Allow the relevant agency to comment on the overall recovery and support efforts taking place.
- People are interested in people, so is the media. Ensure community members are able to be involved in media activities.
- Local, state and national media all operate on the same basis. It is only their focus that changes, be it local affairs, or broader 'big picture' issues.
- When in doubt, use the principle of 'colour and movement' to your advantage. Media will respond best when a story offers visuals, an 'angle' or 'hook', and some sort of action that can be captured.
- Be proactive in contacting the media and forging relationships with them.
- Keep a log or archive of all media releases and responses given to the media.
- Record all the enquiries you are receiving from the media, as this will allow you to track what they are interested in.

For tips on developing a media release see p.142.

In an emergency environment, there are two general ways you will be dealing with the media:

1. Reacting to questions or enquiries from the media
2. Pitching a story to the media.

Tips for dealing with enquiries:

- Have rules in place about who can, and who can't, speak to the media.
- Ensure all staff or community-based media representatives are aware of media guidelines and know who to direct certain enquiries to.
- Develop key messages and Q&As that are disseminated to all staff. This will ensure you are not caught off-guard.
- Pre-identify stories with images and a 'hook' that can be given to media in response to negative questions.
- Know the 'numbers' involved in your services. It is important to give these to the media, e.g. '1,200 psychosocial support house visits have been conducted'.
- If you don't know something, say so. Don't try to make information up that is not 100% factual.
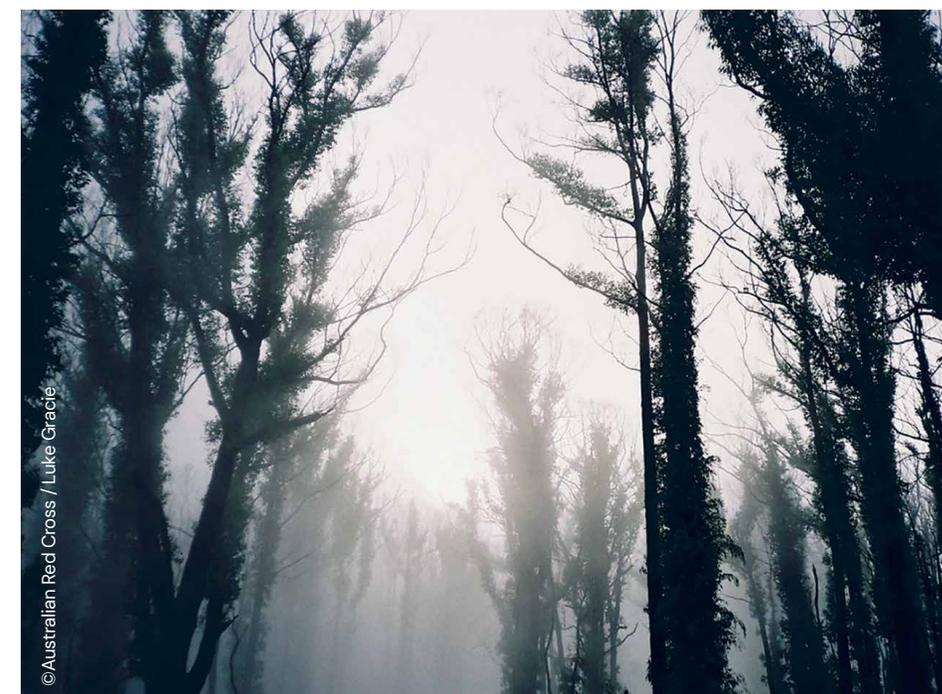
©Australian Red Cross / Luke Gracie

Tips for pitching a story to the media:

In a recovery situation or during sustained periods of unrest, particularly as time goes on, there may be situations where you want media coverage and need to pitch your story. Pitching a story is a great way to get a positive piece in the media. Getting stories in the media can also be a way of reminding the public of a 'forgotten emergency' (see p.139 on 'how to advocate for forgotten emergencies').

- Think about what you will actually achieve by having your story in the media, and what you will risk. Is it worth it?
- Don't be afraid to pitch any story to the media. Reporters often struggle to fill space in a page or news report, so they may be happy to receive an interesting story.
- Pre-established relationships will be very useful in pitching a story. However, there is nothing wrong with contacting a reporter you have never met to pitch a story. Have a well prepared piece, with contacts and potential images, ready to give to the media.
- Understand the nuances of the specific media you are contacting, e.g. focus on local issues and people for a local newspaper, ensure interesting visuals are available for a television pitch.
- Learn the timelines and deadlines journalists are under.
- Consider pitching an op-ed (opinion/editorial) piece.

Visit www.newspapers.com.au for a full list of every newspaper in Australia.

Having key messages is integral to any media and communications plan

Characteristics of a strong message include:[65]

New information

If it's not new, it's not news. A reporter won't be interested in a story someone else has already told.

Clear and unambiguous

Spokespeople only have a few seconds to get the message across, so make it count. Have clear, concise key messages.

Numbers matter

The media loves numbers in a news piece: how many people assisted in a program, how many people have visited recovery centres, how many financial grants have been given, etc.

Passion/compassion

The message must have feeling and not sound like it comes from a cold, detached robot. This is true not only in the development of messages, but also for delivery in an interview. Make sure you have chosen the right person to be your spokesperson.

People focussed

People care about people, not things or organisations. Use words like 'people', 'families', 'mothers' etc. as often as possible, instead of more bureaucratic sounding labels like 'beneficiaries' or 'households'. Also, do not use abbreviations or acronyms as they can alienate audiences and make documents read like technical reports.

©Australian Red Cross / Leonie Marshall

How to advocate for forgotten or less visible emergencies

Crises that aren't new or those that aren't as visible or sudden (such as drought, climate change, pandemic or types of conflict) can still make news. However, it is helpful if you can find a 'new angle' or new information. Agencies can do a lot to boost the media visibility of long-term, complex emergencies through creative communications.

What are the advantages of getting exposure for 'your' disaster?

Funding
This is the most obvious reason to search for greater exposure. The greater the public interest, the more likely it will attract financial support.

Political pressure
Greater interest and public concern can exert pressure on political figures and policy.

Community impact
When emergencies are 'forgotten' or their affects are 'invisible' to the public, it can leave communities feeling ignored and alone in their grief. A greater public profile can allow affected people to feel accepted by the broader community, and increase the public's understanding of what affected people, or groups within affected areas, are going through. Media interest can also help in practical ways such as promoting tourist attractions.

Preparedness
Greater exposure about the long-term impacts of emergencies may encourage others to be better prepared.

Tips for getting exposure:

Keep up a dialogue with the media

Most journalists are not specialists in humanitarian issues. Agencies can help by taking on a quasi-educational role, entering into constructive dialogue about emergencies. The time to do this is not 15 minutes before deadline, however, it's a long-term, ongoing process.

Journalists are hungry for background material, such as profiles and fact sheets, to help them get a grip on complex emergencies. Provide this information on your website, along with up-to-date contact details of experts for interviews.

Put a number on it

Darfur hit the headlines when the United Nations put the number of people affected at one million. The Democratic Republic of Congo made the news in 2005 when the International Rescue Committee released a mortality study with the jaw-dropping figure of 3.8 million dead since 1998. It may seem a cynical way to drum up attention, but such numbers give journalists pegs to hang their stories on. They also answer the question that so often haunts long-term emergencies: 'Why write about this today?' They also capture the public imagination, going some way towards quantifying the otherwise unimaginable.

A well crafted superlative can do the same. United Nations relief coordinator Jan Egeland gave reporters something to write about in March 2005 by saying the toll in the Democratic Republic of Congo over the past six years amounted to 'one tsunami every six months'. While events occurring in Australia will inevitably have smaller numbers, the same principle applies. Giving reporters a hook to report on will substantially increase the likelihood that your story is picked up.

Invest in media relations

If organisations want greater coverage of forgotten emergencies, they need to invest in communications training and expertise, down to the local level. Big organisations have formidable communications teams, and it shows in their media exposure.

It's not only an issue for global aid agencies though. Smaller organisations can follow the same principles by forming relationships with key media contacts and spending time developing strong media plans.

Be creative and proactive

Tell the bigger story through the eyes of individuals. Follow the news agenda closely and find ways to fit what you're doing into it. If you're dealing with local press, look for local angles. A key barrier to crisis coverage is the cost and logistical difficulty of sending journalists to crisis zones. If your budget allows, consider organising trips for reporters.

Make it visual

Nothing sells a story like a good picture. No matter how important an issue is, strong visuals will always increase the chances it is reported on. When pitching a story, try to ensure there is 'colour and movement' that can be photographed or filmed. The visuals don't necessarily have to be spectacular; smaller, more community focused stories will similarly benefit from having 'colour and movement'.

Examples could include: children playing in a rebuilt park, or an owner reunited with a dog that was treated by a free veterinary service. The stories don't need to be ground-breaking to gain media interest.

Bring in the big names

It's controversial, but enlisting the help of celebrities can work. Be careful you don't pick the wrong celebrity though, as a scandal in their private life can overshadow or damage the reputation of your services.

Ask for help

In some instances, organisations or bodies that cannot provide financial assistance may be open to providing in-kind support. If your organisation lacks communications or media capacity, consider negotiating with larger organisations or government bodies to provide you with in-kind organisational capacity assistance.

Finally, never give up

Persistence really does pay off!

How to write a media release

Writing the headline

It should be brief, clear and to the point: an ultra-compact version of the press release's key point.

Writing the media release body copy

• The press release should be written as you would want it to appear in a news story.

• The lead, or first sentence, in any media release should reflect the lead in a news story in a newspaper. It needs to grab the reader and say concisely what is happening.

• The lead should be one sentence, less than 35 words in length, use only active verbs, and include 'who', 'what', 'where'. 'When', 'how' and 'why' is what makes up the rest of the release. The next one to two sentences expand on the lead. This first paragraph (two to three sentences) must sum up the media release and the further content must elaborate on it. Journalists won't read the entire media release if the start of the article is boring.

• Journalists write news stories in an 'inverted pyramid' structure – the most important 'newsworthy' information is the 'base' at the top of the story, and less important and background information follows in order of importance or newsworthiness. You need to do the same with your media release.

• The media release body copy should be compact. Avoid using long sentences and paragraphs. Avoid repetition and using jargon, make the story simple to understand.

• Deal with actual facts – events, products, services, people, targets, goals, plans, projects. Try to provide maximum use of concrete facts.

• Include information about the availability of images or diagrams that may accompany your story.

A simple method for writing an effective press release is to make a list of the following things:

• Who is affected?
• What happened; what is the actual news?
• When did this happen?
• Where did this happen?
• How did this happen?
• Why is this news?
• The people, products, items, dates and other things related with the news.
• The purpose behind the news.
• Your project – the source of this news.

Tie it together

Provide some extra information (e.g. weblinks) that supports your press release.

Add contact information

If your press release is really newsworthy, journalists will want more information or will want to interview key people associated with it. Make sure they can contact key people by phone and email.

Monitoring and evaluating your communications

Evaluation of community services is vital, otherwise you simply don't know if your services are working effectively or not. It is also just as important to monitor and evaluate your communications continuously to see if they are reaching the target audience and meeting the needs of the community. The process of monitoring and evaluating your communications should focus on these questions:

1. Is the community getting the information they need?
2. Do people know what support is available?
3. Do affected people know where and how to access information to make decisions?

Evaluating communications can seem daunting because it appears hard to measure the impact of a brochure or flyer for example. However, there are ways to measure your communications. Throughout this resource there are references to ensuring that feedback processes are factored into planning. If this is done correctly, evaluating the success of your communications is far easier as feedback is constantly coming, which means you can adapt to the changing communication needs of your community. Remember that monitoring and evaluating your communications is an ongoing and continuous process.

Tips for evaluating communications

- Don't try and measure unrealistic goals; one public information campaign by one organisation won't fix all the issues in recovery!
- If appropriate (and if you have the budget) consider engaging an external consultant or agency to review your communications and distribution methods.

- Keep a record of the amount of materials distributed for quantitative review.
- If there is a call to action on the communication (e.g. if alerting people to an event or counselling service) measure any increases in attendance.
- If you're unable to ask the affected people receiving your communications for their responses directly (quite likely), consider asking other people (such as the conduits identified on p.26) to review the quality and impact of your communications campaign.
- When posting evaluations, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
- Provide a realistic deadline for stakeholders to return evaluations.
- If a full evaluation is not possible, some is always better than none.
- Surveys don't have to be conducted in person – phone or mail surveys are fine. Also, volunteers can survey one another.
- There are existing survey options on the internet, such as Survey Monkey.
- Be realistic about what you want the evaluation to achieve and how you will measure the program's effectiveness.
- Don't be scared of negative responses, these are normal outcomes of an evaluation.
- Use channels such as Facebook pages or community recovery committees, and the like, to gauge the impact of your communications.
- Utilise analytics from website, podcasts, blogs, etc. to monitor the traffic to your information pages and see who is engaging in what and why.
- Have a process in place to implement service improvements, otherwise the evaluation will have been wasted and you will lose currency with volunteers, clients and partner organisations.

See examples of communications programs evaluated at: http://www.comminit.com/

Where to find further information

How do I set up a website or blog?

Website and blogs are really simple to set up, you just sign up and then follow the prompts to design your website or blog. A few of the main platforms are listed below:

Website	Blog
wix.com	wordpress.com
squarespace.com	blogger.com
godaddy.com	wix.com
weebly.com	squarespace.com

Alternatively, type 'create website' or 'create blog' into your search engine for a list of options and advice. Google Domains provides a good overview of how to easily setup a website, as well as selecting a website builder.

As there are many options for creating both websites and blogs, it is important to do some research to see what best suits your purpose. Most website designers will let you design your webpage for free, however they will charge you a monthly hosting fee when you are ready to make the website live. Blogs are usually free to set up and publish, however, they act more like a newsletter than a set of isolated articles. Understand the benefits and limitations of both options and the different ways you can go about setting them up, then choose what best suits your specific needs.

How do I create a PDF document?

There is a lot of software available online that will allow you to create PDF documents. Simply type 'PDF creator' into your search engine and you should be able to find the software that suits your needs.

Some PDF creators are free while others have more functions and are purchasable. Decide which will work best for you.

Alternatively, on both Windows and Apple, you can convert Word documents (and other text files) to PDFs. You can do this by using the 'Export' or 'Print' function.

How do I open a PDF document?

You may need certain software to open a PDF document on a computer. If you are having trouble opening PDFs, there are many different types, but the most common (and free) software for PDFs is Adobe Reader. You can download the software at:

http://get.adobe.com/reader

How do I send bulk SMS messages?

There are many ways to send bulk SMS messages, ranging from technical hardware devices to simple websites. Type 'bulk SMS' into your search engine and see which product suits your needs best.

In some cases, it may also be worthwhile setting up a Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger group. You should do this if you want to open a dialogue as people who receive messages on these groups will be able to respond.

Useful websites and resources

Communications

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' Community Engagement and Accountability Hub and Toolkit
www.communityengagementhub.org
www.ifrc.org/document/cea-toolkit

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Audiences
www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/communicating-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-audiences

ABC's Media Literacy Website for Students
www.abc.net.au/education/media-literacy

Thomas Reuter Foundation News
www.trust.org/media-development
www.trust.org/journalism
www.trust.org/training

Australian Council for International Development's Development Advocacy Resources
www.acfid.asn.au/resources

The Communication Initiative Network
www.comminit.com

United Nations Information Centres
https://unic.un.org/

Emergency management

Australian Red Cross – Emergency Services
www.redcross.org.au/get-help/emergencies

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent
www.ifrc.org/disasters-climate-and-crises

The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response
https://spherestandards.org/

Australian National Recovery and Resilience Agency
www.recovery.gov.au

Emergency Management Australia
www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about-us/our-portfolios/emergency-management

Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub
www.knowledge.aidr.org.au

Mental health

Phoenix Australia Disaster Mental Health Hub
www.phoenixaustralia.org/disaster-hub

IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support
www.pscentre.org

World Health Organisation – Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies
www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/en/

National Mental Health Commission – Our stories: Beyond the disaster
www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/getmedia/5221a681-0530-475b-8396-c8fc51c1ac3d/Our-Stories-Beyond-the-Disaster-Research-Report

Other useful websites and resources

Australian Council for International Development
www.acfid.asn.au

Australian Red Cross
www.redcross.org.au

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
www.ifrc.org

Gender and Disaster Pod
www.genderanddisaster.com.au/

Media contacts list

Media contacts list	Name	Outlet		Phone	Notes
			Title	Email	
				Address	
	Name	Outlet		Phone	Notes
			Title	Email	
				Address	
	Name	Outlet		Phone	Notes
			Title	Email	
				Address	
	Name	Outlet		Phone	Notes
			Title	Email	
				Address	
	Name	Outlet		Phone	Notes
			Title	Email	
				Address	

Other contacts list

Other contacts list				
Name	Status in recovery	Organisation & role (if applicable)	Contact details	Notes
Name	Status in recovery	Organisation & role (if applicable)	Contact details	Notes
Name	Status in recovery	Organisation & role (if applicable)	Contact details	Notes
Name	Status in recovery	Organisation & role (if applicable)	Contact details	Notes
Name	Status in recovery	Organisation & role (if applicable)	Contact details	Notes
Name	Status in recovery	Organisation & role (if applicable)	Contact details	Notes

Issues in recovery record

Issues in recovery record				
Person	Issue	Location	Responsibility?	Notes
	Details		Referred to?	
Person	Issue	Location	Responsibility?	Notes
	Details		Referred to?	
Person	Issue	Location	Responsibility?	Notes
	Details		Referred to?	
Person	Issue	Location	Responsibility?	Notes
	Details		Referred to?	
Person	Issue	Location	Responsibility?	Notes
	Details		Referred to?	

The Seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace amongst all people.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Bibliography

ACFID Development Advocacy Toolkit

Anikeeva, O., Steenkamp, M. & Arbon, P. 'The future of social media use during emergencies in Australia: insights from the 2014 Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management Conference social media workshop'. Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Volume 30. 2015.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. 'Living language'.

Beckenham, A. & Nicholls, S. 'Government communication strategies for community recovery following the ACT Bushfires, January 2003'. Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 19(4), 2004.

Bessette, G. Involving the community: A guide to participatory development communication, International Development Research Centre, 2004.

Bullock, J., Haddow, G. & Bell, R., 'Communicating during Emergencies in the United States', The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol. 19 No 2. May 2004

Burke, S. "APS responds to mental health needs following the Victorian bushfires" The Australian Psychological Society website.

City of Lake Macquarie. A Guide to Disability Awareness and Communication. Available at: www.lakemac.com.au/downloads/disability_communications.pdf

Collins, A. 'Disability sector left vulnerable by coronavirus response despite early warnings, royal commission hears'. ABC News. 2020

Coyle, D. & Meier, P., New Technologies in Emergencies and Conflicts: The Role of Information and Social Networks. Washington, D.C. and London, UK: UN Foundation–Vodafone Foundation Partnership, 2009.

Crondstedt, M., 'Prevention, Preparedness, Response, Recovery – an outdated concept?', Australian Journal of Emergency Management, Vol. 17, No. 2, Aug 2002.

Diaz, J. & Bordoloi, S. 'Crisis to Recovery: the road to resilience', Disaster Mental Health and Psychosocial Care Manuals, Number 6. Indian Red Cross, 2004.

Disability Emergency Management Advocacy, Inclusive Emergency Management Forum Proceedings Monday 31st August 2009.

Drew, K., Gender in Disaster Response: Phase One Report. Women and Development Unit International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, Aug 2000.

Eburn. 'Media access to emergencies – command, control or co-ordination?' The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Volume 25, No. 01, January 2010.

Emergency Management Australia. Recovery: Manual 10. Canberra: Emergency Management Australia, 2004.

Enarson, E. et al. 'Working with Women at Risk: Practical Guidelines for Assessing Local Disaster Risk', International Hurricane Centre, Florida International University, June 2003.

Eyre, A., 'Humanitarian assistance in UK emergencies' Emerging Health Threats Journal, 1:e9, 2008.

Eyre, A., 'Meeting the needs of people in emergencies: a review of UK experiences and capability'. Emerging Health Threats Journal, 1:e9 2008.

Federal Emergency Management Agency. 'Basic Guidelines for Public Information Officers (PIOs), National Incident Management System (NIMS)'. FEMA 517/November 2007. Available at: https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/Preparedness___Disaster_Recovery/General_Preparedness___Recovery/Home/A4497.pdf or https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/dbhis/preparing-disaster-people-disabilities-special-needs

Federal Emergency Management Agency. "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs". FEMA, American Red Cross Available at: www.redcross.org/services/disaster/beprepared/ disability.pdf

First Nations Communications Toolkit, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. 2007

Gordon, R. 'The social dimension of emergency recovery' in Emergency Management Australia, Recovery: Manual 10 (no author). Canberra: Emergency Management Australia, 2004.

Gordon, R. 'The social system as site of disaster impact and resource for recovery', The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol. 19 No. 4, November 2004.

Home Office and Cabinet Office. The Needs of Faith Communities in Major Emergencies: Some Guidelines. Produced by the Home Office and Cabinet Office July 2005. Available at: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/132745/faith_communities.pdf

Hutchinson, G. and Dalton, J. 'A guide for the media on communicating in public health emergencies', BBC Media Action, 2018.

IFRC Reference Centre for Psychosocial Support, 'Psychosocial Interventions: A Handbook.' IFRC, 2009.

Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (IDeA) (UK) 'Connecting with Communities Communications Toolkit'. Available at: www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=7816073

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. 'Summary Guidelines and Checklist for Integrating Gender Analysis and Assessment', Interagency Workshop on Integration of Gender into Needs Assessment and Planning of Humanitarian Assistance.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. Interagency Standing Committee Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007.

International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies, 'From Crisis to Recovery'. Available at: www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/recovering/index.asp

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Communicating in emergencies guidelines, 2010.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 'Review of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Recovery Operations Summary Report', IFRC. Available at: https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/recovery-operations-en.pdf

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Our World. Your Move. 2009 Campaign social media toolkit. Available at: http://redcrossyouth.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/social20media20toolkit-en.pdf

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Community engagement and accountability toolkit and guidelines. Available at https://www.communityengagementhub.org/

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. 'Psycho-social handbook'. 2008.

International Federations of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 'Plan 2010-2011: Principles and Values (Behavioural change, discrimination, gender and violence)', Executive Summary. Available at: www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual10/MAA000051Op.pdf

Kelly, L., 'International Advocacy: Measuring performance and effectiveness', Presented at the 2002 Australasian Evaluation Society International Conference October/November 2002 Wollongong Australia. Available at: www.evaluationcanada.ca/distribution/20021030_kelly_linda.pdf

King Baudouin Foundation. How to Communicate: Strategic communication on migration and integration, 2006.

Leadbeater, A., 'Speaking As One: The joint provision of public information in emergencies', The Australian Journal of Emergency Management, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 2010.

McDonnell, I., An International Perspective on Communications Strategies for the Millennium Development Goals, OECD Development Centre.

Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management (NZ). 'Public Information Management Information for the CDEM sector', July 2007.

Murrell, T., Social Media Fills Bushfire Crisis Vacuum, Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA). Available at: www.pria.com.au/resources/asset_id/369/cid/382/parent/0/t/ resources/title/social-media-fills-bushfire-crisis-vacuum

Newbery, A., 'Australian communities slam tokenistic community engagement practices'. Public Relations Institute of Australia website.

Nicholls, S. 'Disaster memorials as government communication'. Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 21(4), 2006.

Nicholls, S. and Healy, C. 'Marketing recovery: Outreach and Communication Strategies for Recovering Communities'. (Presentation)

Nicholls, S. and Healy, C., 'Communication with disaster survivors: towards best practice', The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol. 23 No. 3, August 2008.

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). The Logical Framework Approach (LFA), 1999.

NSW Institute of Psychiatry and Centre for Mental Health. (2000). Disaster Mental Health Response Handbook. North Sydney: NSW Health.

Office of the Advocacy for Children & Young People (ACYP) New South Wales. 'Children & Young People's Experience of Disaster', 2020.

Pearce, C., Measurement and evaluation – Evaluation elevating PR, Public Relations Institute of Australia (PRIA). Available at: https://www.pria.com.au/education/measurement–evaluation/

Phillips, B., 'Using online tools to foster holistic, participatory recovery: an educational approach', The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol. 19 No. 4, November 2004.

Priestley, M. & Hemingway, L., 'Disability and Disaster Recovery: A Tale of Two Cities?' Journal of Social Work in Disability & Rehabilitation, Volume 5, Issue 3 & 4 January 2007.

Pruitt, B. & Thomas, P. Democratic Dialogue– A Handbook for Practitioners. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, General Secretariat of the Organisation of American States, United Nations Development Programme, 2007.

Recovery Information Management (Author not listed). The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol 1 No 10 Autumn 1995.

Regel, S. 'Are we barking up the wrong research tree?' Coping with Crisis, IFRC Psychosocial Centre, No. 1, 2010.

Reuters AlertNet. 'Aid agency blogging: Seizing opportunities, minimising risks', Reuters Foundation, 2008.

Reuters AlertNet. 'TIP SHEET: How to 'sell' forgotten emergencies', Reuters Foundation, 2005. Access via: https://archive.globalpolicy.org/ngos/advocacy/network/2005/1005media.htm

Reuters AlertNet. 'TIP SHEET: PR master class for aid agencies', Reuters Foundation, 2005. Access via: http://jdhr.org/publications/media-and-development/Media%20Tips%20for%20Aid%20agencies.pdf

Reuters AlertNet. 'TIPSHEET: Finding your story, pitch and media outlet', Reuters Foundation, 2009.

Ryan and Matheson. 'Significance of communication in emergency management' The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Volume 25, No. 01, January 2010.

Stokke, K. Humanitarian Response to Natural Disasters: A Synthesis of Evaluation Findings, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), 2007.

Teichroeb, R., 'Covering Children and Trauma: A guide for journalism professionals', DART Center for journalism and trauma, 2006.

The Age. 'Many Aussies lack literacy skills, ABS' July 23, 2008 Available at: http://news.theage.com.au/national/many-aussies-lack-literacy-skills-abs-20080723-3jqr.html

The Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, Oxfam Publishing, Oxford, 2000.

United Nations General Assembly. 'Report of the open–ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction'. 2016.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 'OCHA and slow-onset emergencies'. 2011.

Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS). 'Report: Disaster and Disadvantage – Social vulnerability in emergency management'. 2014.

Wall, I. & Robinson, L. 'Left in the Dark: The unmet need for information in humanitarian responses'. BBC World Service Trust Policy Briefing #2, October 2008.

Wall, I. 'After disaster: information for life'. openDemocracy website. Available at: www.opendemocracy.net/article/after-disaster-information-for-life accessed 27/01/2010

Wall, I. 'The Right to Know: the challenge of public information and accountability in Aceh and Sri Lanka'. Office of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery. 2006.

Working with Aboriginal People and Communities: A Practical Resource. NSW Department of Community Services. 2009

World Disasters Report 2005: Focus on information in disasters. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Cross Societies, 2005.

World Health Organization. 'Gender and Health in Disasters'. *Gender and Health*. 2002. Available at: www.who.int/gender/other_health/en/genderdisasters.pdf

References

1 United Nations General Assembly. 'Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction'. 2016.

2 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 'OCHA and slow-onset emergencies'. 2011.

3 Peel, D., Berry, H. L., & Schirmer, J. Farm exit intention and wellbeing: a study of Australian farmers. Journal of rural studies, 47. 2016.

4 ibid.

5 International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies, 'From Crisis to Recovery'.

6 Emergency Management Australia, Australian Emergency Manual Series number 10, Recovery. 2004.

7 op. cit. International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies.

8 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. 'Psycho-social handbook'. 2008.

9 'Recovery Information Management'. The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol. 10, No. 1 Autumn 1995, p. 25.

10 National Principles for Recovery. 2008.

11 Nicholls and Healy. 'Communications with disaster survivors: towards best practice'. Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol. 23 No. 3. 2008.

12 International Committee of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society & International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies. 'A Red Cross Red Crescent Guide to Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)'. 2016. Available at https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/IFRC-CEA-GUIDE-0612-LR-1.pdf

13 ibid.

14 ibid.

15 ibid.

16 ibid.

17 Office of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery. 'The Right to Know'. 2006

18 ibid.

19 International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies. 'Tool 9 - checklist of information to share with communities'. Community Engagement and Accountability Toolkit. 2016.

20 United States National Institute of Mental Health. 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder'. Fact Sheet.

21 ibid.

22 Hobfoll, S., Watson, P., Bell, C. & Bryant, R. 'Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence'. Psychiatry Interpersonal & Biological Processes. Vol.70 No.4. 2007.

23 Wall, I. & Robinson, L. 'Left in the Dark: The unmet need for information in humanitarian responses'. Internews Project Report, in BBC World Service Trust Policy Briefing #2. 2008.

24 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Final Report Summary, p. 5. 2009.

25 World Health Organization (WHO). 'Gender and Health in Disasters'.2002. p.1.

26 ibid. p.2.

27 International Federations of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 'Plan 2010-2011: Principles and Values (Behavioural change, discrimination, gender and violence)'. Executive Summary, p.3. 2009.

28 Parkinson, D. (forthcoming). 'Gender-based Violence and Disasters.' Benouar, D. (Ed.), The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Natural Hazard Science. Oxford University Press.

29 op.cit. WHO.

30 Gribble, K., Peterson, M. & Brown, D. Emergency preparedness for infant and young child feeding in emergencies (IYCF-E): an Australian audit of emergency plans and guidance. BMC Public Health 19. 2019.

31 Parkinson, D. Duncan, A. & Archer, F. 2019, 'Barriers and enablers to women in fire and emergency leadership roles'. Gender in Management. Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 78-93.

32 Kassova, L. "The Missing Perspectives of Women in COVID-19 News – A special report on women's under-representation in news and media". 2020. Available at: https://www.iwmf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020.09.16-FULL-COVID-REPORT.pdf.

33 Zara C. Parkinson D. Duncan A & Joyce K. 2016. 'Men and Disaster: Men's experiences of the Black Saturday bushfires and aftermath'. The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. Vol.31 No.3. 2016.

34 ibid.

35 The term LGBTIQ+, used by LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, has been adopted to consider and represent many diverse gender and sexual identities in a safe, healthy and inclusive way. This also includes people and communities who identify as non-binary, asexual and bodily diverse throughout Australia. It is important to note that terminology continues to evolve as individuals and groups develop new ways of describing their identities to reflect their lived experience and authentic selves.

36 Gorman-Murray, A., McKinnon, S., Dominey-Howes, D., Nash, C., & Bolton, R. 'Listening and learning: giving voice to trans experiences of disaster'. Gender, Place & Culture. 2018.

37 Parkinson, D. Leonard, L. Duncan, A. & Jeffrey, J. 'Identifying the experiences and needs of LGBTI communities before, during and after emergencies'. Gender and Disaster Pod. 2018.

38 Guadagno, L. 'Reference handbook: Integrating migrants in emergency preparedness, response and recovery in their host countries'. International Organization for Migration. 2016.

39 Parkinson, D., & Zara, C. The hidden disaster: Domestic violence in the aftermath of natural disaster. The Australian Journal of Emergency Management. 28(2). 2013.

40 Gearin, M., & Knight, B. Family Violence Perpetrators Using COVID-19 as a Form of Abuse We Have Not Experienced Before. ABC News Australia. 2020. Retrieved from: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-29/coronavirus-family-violence-surge-in-victoria/12098546

41 op.cit. Gorman-Murray et al.

42 Williamson, B., Weir, J. & Cavanagh, V. 'Strength from perpetual grief: how Aboriginal people experience the bushfire crisis'. The Conversation. 2020.

43 Williamson, B. & Quinn, P. 'Unwelcoming and reluctant to help: bushfire recovery hasn't considered Aboriginal culture — but things are finally starting to change', The Conversation, 2021

44 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. 'Communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Audiences'. 2016.

45 United Nations. 'Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples'. 2008.

46 National Indigenous Australians Agency. 'Renewing a Vital Indigenous Voice and Community Asset – The Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector'. 2021.

47 op.cit. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

48 ibid.

49 UNICEF Australia & Royal Far West. 'After the Disaster – Recovery for Australia's Children'. p. 12. 2021.

50 ibid. p. 11.

51 Fountain, L. Tofa, M. Haynes, K. Taylor, M. & Ferguson, S. 'Older adults in disaster and emergency management: What are the priority research areas in Australia?'. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction. Vol. 39. 2019.

52 ibid.

53 Stough, L. & Kelman, I. 'Ch 12: People with disabilities and disasters' in Rodríguez, H, Donner, W & Trainor, J (eds). Handbook of Disaster Research 2nd Edition, Cham: Springer International Publishing. p. 225–242. 2018.

54 Fox, MH. White, GW. Rooney, C. & Cahill, A. 'The psychosocial impact of Hurricane Katrina on persons with disabilities and independent living center staff living on the American Gulf Coast'. Rehabilitation Psychology. Vol. 55(3). p. 231–240. 2010.

55 Abbott, D. & Porter, S. 'Environmental hazard and disabled people: from vulnerable to expert to interconnected'. Disability & Society. Vol. 28(6, SI). 2013.

56 Australian Human Rights Commission. 'Human Rights and People with Disability'.

57 Human Resources and Skill Development Canada. 'A Way with Words and Images – Suggestions for the portrayal of people with disabilities'. 2006.

58 Australian Bureau of Statistics. 'Migration, Australia - Statistics on Australia's international migration, internal migration (interstate and intrastate), and the population by country of birth'. 2021.

59 Marlowe, J. 'Belonging and Disaster Recovery: Refugee-Background Communities and the Canterbury Earthquakes'. British Journal of Social Work. Vol. 45. 2015.

60 Uekusa, S. 'The paradox of social capital: A case of immigrants, refugees and linguistic minorities in the Canterbury and Tohoku disasters'. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction. Vol 48. 2020.

61 Wu, J. Snell, G. & Samji, H. 'Climate anxiety in young people: a call to action'. The Lancet. Vol 4, Issue 10. 2020.

62 Nursey-Bray, M. 'Not passive victims: Indigenous Australians respond to climate change'. Foreground. 2019.

63 Jetter, M. 'Terrorism and the Media: The Effect of US Television Coverage on Al-Qaeda Attacks'. IZA Discussion Paper No. 10708. 2017.

64 Australian Government. 'Style Manual – Literacy and access'. 2021.

65 International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent. 'Guidelines: Communicating in Emergencies'. p.18. 2009.

Acknowledgments

www.redcross.org.au

Red Cross National Office
23–47 Villiers St
North Melbourne VIC 3051
T +61 3 9345 1800

ACT
Red Cross House
3 Dann Cl
Garran ACT 2605
T +61 2 6234 7600

NSW
St Andrews House
Level 3, 464 Kent St
Sydney NSW 2000
T +61 2 9229 4111

NT
CASCOM Centre
Level 1, 13 Scaturchio St
Casuarina NT 0810
T +61 8 8924 3900

QLD
49 Park Rd
Milton QLD 4064
T +61 7 3367 7222

SA
U5/12 Percy Court
Adelaide SA 5000
T +61 8 8100 4500

TAS
146 Elizabeth St
Hobart TAS 7000
T +61 3 6235 6077

VIC
23–47 Villiers St
North Melbourne
VIC 3051
T +61 3 9345 1800

WA
110 Goderich St
East Perth WA 6004
T +61 8 9225 8888