

Resilience and NDIS Participants: a guide



Resources for NDIS
Emergency and Disaster
Management

How to support NDIS Participants to maintain good mental health throughout emergencies and disasters.

Introduction

Disasters and emergencies are a part of life that we will all likely experience at some time.

In Australia, natural disaster events like bushfires and floods occur every year. The recent Covid-19 pandemic is another example of an emergency situation we have all had to face.

It is important to remember, and to remind NDIS Participants, that we need to get ready for these things to happen.

▶ **We prepare.**

Then, with the help of others, we do things to keep safe.

▶ **We respond.**

After the event is over, we find ways to get our lives back to normal.

▶ **We recover.**

This guide has been put together to help you support NDIS Participants to become mentally prepared for, and recover from, disasters and emergencies like bushfires, floods, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Inside you will find useful information, activities to complete with the person you are supporting, and tips to guide you along the way.

Remember to support individuals to work at their own pace – together you can come back to the guide as many times as you need to, to work through the activities.

This guide will provide you with:

- Tips and skills to increase your awareness and to support NDIS Participants to practise mentally preparing for, responding to, and recovering from, emergencies and disasters.
- Real-life case studies to show you how other people have experienced disaster recovery.
- Information on how to support others to build resilience, or be mentally strong, so they can create their own profile of positive ways to take care of themselves.
- Links to useful fact sheets and resources in case you or the person you are supporting want to know more.

Where you see text in a green box like this one, there are specific instructions on what to read aloud with the person you're supporting, or how to complete an activity together.



How mental preparation for emergencies and disasters helps with recovery

Read this aloud to the person you're supporting.

How quickly you recover or get things back on track after an emergency or disaster has a lot to do with how you think and feel about the situation.

What happens in the preparation and response stages of an emergency or disaster also affects your recovery.

Did you know...

Mentally preparing means getting your mind ready for something. It involves positive self thoughts like **"I can do it"** and **"I will get through this"**

There are physical and practical things you can do (like emergency planning), but there are also psychological (thinking and feeling) steps you can take.

This part of the guide will give you tips you can use to support someone to mentally prepare for an emergency or disaster. You can practice these with the NDIS Participants you support.

Read through this next section together. Remember to pause between each of the A-I-M-E paragraphs so the person can ask questions. When you get up to “M”, look up the video links on page 14 of this guide and practise deep breathing exercises together.

There is an easy way to remember the steps for being mentally prepared... It comes from the *Australian Psychological Society (2024)* and it’s called, A-I-M-E.

The 4 steps to being mentally prepared: A I M E

1. Anticipate
2. Identify
3. Manage
4. Engage

The A is for *anticipate*:

This means guessing how you will respond and how you might behave in a stressful situation.

Most people feel worried or anxious during times of emergency and disaster, which is not always helpful.

The I is for *identify*:

This means noticing how you are feeling in your body and your thoughts.

It can be helpful to pay attention to any physical feelings (like butterflies in the tummy, headaches, racing heart and muscle tension). When these physical feelings happen, they can often trigger stressful thoughts (like “I can’t cope”, “I’m so scared”, “I don’t know what to do”).

The M is for *manage*:

This means what you will do to cope with the stress you may experience.

In stressful situations like emergencies and disasters, there are two main things you can do to feel calm and in control.

These are i) slowing down your breathing as this will calm your physical feelings and help you to think better; and ii) swapping scary and worried thoughts for more helpful ones.

The E is for *engage*:

This means keeping in touch with someone you trust to help you through this time.

During times of high stress it is important to stay connected with at least one other person whom you feel comfortable to share.

Use this AIME mental prep plan template to help the person you support to understand how they are likely to respond in an emergency or disaster. It will also help them to discover which coping strategies work best for them. We sometimes call this *self care*.

AIME mental prep plan template

Name:	Date:
Completed with:	

1. ANTICIPATE

Do you naturally tend to worry about things? **YES** **NO**

If Yes, it's good to be aware of this and remember the useful coping strategies you normally use.

If No, be aware that during times of emergency and disaster it is normal to worry more than usual.

How do you think you would feel about seeing and hearing emergency and disaster warning messages on television, radio and on the internet?

These messages often have frightening pictures and sounds to make sure people understand the risks of the situation.

2. IDENTIFY

How do you know when you are stressed or upset?

What sort of things do you do?

What words do you say?

How do you feel (both in your body and your thoughts)?

3. MANAGE

What are some positive actions you could take to help you feel calmer during a stressful situation?

Think about what you normally do in these situations. Do you talk to a support person?

Do you keep yourself distracted with your usual favourite activities?

Do you do relaxing activities?

What are some positive things you could do to help you feel better? What self care activities make you feel comforted and safe? Talking to a friend? Having a hug?

Doing a favourite activity or watching a favourite show?

What information do you need to feel more in control during an emergency or disaster event?

Do you like to be reminded about what is going to happen in different scenarios? For example, that you will be evacuated from your home if a fire or flood gets too close.

Do you like to know that your family and friends are safe?

4. ENGAGE

Different people in our lives can help with different things.

Who are your most trusted support people?

Who do you ask when you need a chat?

Who do you ask when you need a hug?

Who do you ask when you need laugh?

Who do you ask when you need information about something?

NEXT STEPS:

From what you have learnt about yourself by completing this form, what are three steps you will now take to help you feel mentally prepared for stressful situations, like emergencies and disasters?

1.

2.

3.

This next section is for use after an emergency or disaster has occurred. Read this aloud to the person you are supporting.

After an emergency or disaster threat has passed, the next phase is recovery from the event.

Did you know...

A **self check-in** means asking yourself how you're feeling or how you're going in a situation. Sometimes, our supporters will do a **check-in** with us.

Recovering from a disaster or emergency can sometimes be as challenging as getting through the event that has happened.

It is important here to check-in with yourself about:

- how you went with the situation (or how you coped) and;
- how you're feeling now.

On the next page you will find a Recovery Self Check-In.

This can be helpful for answering these two questions and for becoming more resilient (mentally strong) through learning about yourself.

How well you coped this time and how you learn from your experience will support you to cope even better the next time a stressful event occurs.

Did you know...

After an emergency or disaster has happened, it is important that people are supported to stay connected with their family, friends, and the community.

Did you know...

Helping someone to be organised with a list of things to do can support them to feel more in control after a stressful and unpredictable event.

Recovery Self Check-In:

How did you go with guessing how you would react in the emergency or disaster situation?

Did you respond the way you expected, or did you behave differently?

How did you go with managing your thoughts and feelings?

Were you able to have helpful thoughts? Were you able to keep your feelings calm when you could feel the stress building?

How did you go with using deep breaths to stay calm?

What other strategies helped you to cope with the situation?

Did you keep in touch with a trusted support person?

Read the case study below with the person you're supporting and make sure to pause several times to ask if the person has any questions.

Case Study: Andrew

Andrew is a young man with Down Syndrome who recently experienced a bushfire.

Andrew lives independently in the community and receives drop-in support from a local disability service three times a week.

When Andrew realised a bushfire was starting to get close to the area he lives, he started to panic. Andrew doesn't normally worry about things, but this time he was really frightened and felt he didn't know what to do.

Andrew would normally call his parents for help and support. During this time though, they were away on holiday, and Andrew decided to ask a neighbour for help.

At this point, Andrew was feeling really uncomfortable. He felt sick in the stomach, and he was speaking quickly as his thoughts raced around. Luckily, his neighbour knew what to do.

Andrew's neighbour could see he was becoming distressed and knew she needed to support him to stay calm and to remember what to do.

She got him a cold drink and they sat down together to chat. As Andrew started to talk about the bushfire and his worries, his neighbour could tell that he was actually well prepared for an event like this – he just needed reminding, and to calm himself.

It was clear that Andrew was feeling extra nervous about the situation because his parents were away. The neighbour reassured Andrew that she would help him to contact them, to let them know what was happening.

Once Andrew started to calm, his neighbour reminded him he was doing an excellent job and pointed out that his slower breathing was helping him.

Next, the neighbour took out a pen and paper and started to write a simple list of things that needed to be done. This would help Andrew to feel in control of the situation.

On the list, they wrote:

1. Call and email Mum and Dad
2. Call Andrew's disability support provider
3. Find Andrew's Individual Emergency Plan and read through it with someone
4. Check Andrew's Go-Bag was up to date
5. Watch a movie (Andrew's favourite thing to do) and relax for the time being

Andrew went home after they wrote the list, and his neighbour helped him to complete the first 4 things on the list.

Andrew started to feel a lot better once he'd had contact with his family and his regular support worker, who agreed to drop-in on Andrew that afternoon.

In this situation, Andrew's neighbour provided what is known as *Psychological First Aid*.

She listened to him, helped him to become calm and supported him to make a plan so he could feel more in control.

The bushfire ended up reaching the edge of Andrew's area, but thankfully he didn't have to evacuate and leave his home.

What was important was that Andrew was mentally prepared and that he had taken practical steps to respond. He knew that he could handle the situation with a little help, and now that he has some experience (and resilience) he will feel more confident if he finds himself in a similar situation in the future.

Now support the person to have a go at answering the following quiz questions about Andrew's case study, to reinforce its key messages.

Case Study Quiz:

1. How did Andrew feel when he realised the bushfire was getting close to his house?
2. What was the first thing Andrew did when he knew he needed help?
3. What were two things Andrew's neighbour did to support him with the situation?
4. (Hint: First she helped him with his feelings and thoughts. Then she helped him to do something practical that would help him feel in control of the situation)
5. What do you think Andrew learned from this situation that might be helpful in another emergency or disaster situation?
6. Do you think Andrew is resilient? Why or why not?

Want to check your answers?

Quiz answers are available at the end of this guide.

Top tips for supporting someone to recover from an emergency or disaster:

- 1 Support the person to recognise they have been through a distressing life event. Reassure them that whatever they are feeling is okay - there is no right or wrong way to feel.
- 2 Remind the person that they are okay and that they can cope with what has happened. Provide reassurance that you are there to support them through this time too.
- 3 Assist the person to be around people they feel comfortable with and who give you the best support.
- 4 Besides talking, find other healthy ways to support the person to let out their feelings. For example, writing down some thoughts in a journal, doing something creative like an artwork, or exercising.
- 5 Support the person to keep up their usual routine as much as possible. Encourage them to do the things they would normally do, at the usual times.
- 6 Make sure the person schedules some time to relax. Encouraging deep breathing exercises is also a good idea. Everyone may be feeling extra tired at the moment, so reminders to rest are also useful.
- 7 Now is not the time for making any big life decisions. Be on the lookout for people you support who might be looking to make a change. Encourage them to wait for the time being.
- 8 Reassure the person it's important to ask for help when they need it. If they're having a bad day or a tough moment, they need to know you're there for them that they can reach out.
- 9 Keep hopeful and support the person to do the same. Remember, things will get better.
- 10 Encourage the person to be kind to themselves and others. Support them to practice self care and to do at least one enjoyable activity every day.

FOR SUPPORT PEOPLE:

Tips for *Recovering from a natural disaster* (Australian Psychological Society):

[Recovering from natural disasters](#)

Practical tips for returning to your home and handling insurances

[Helping you recover after an emergency](#)

Psychological First Aid

It is normal for individuals to experience a stress response after going through an emergency or disaster.

It is even normal for stress reactions to continue in the weeks after a traumatic event, such as a bushfire or flood.

Recent research tells us that psychological debriefing straight after an emergency or disaster – that is, being given information and talking to someone like a counsellor about your experience – is no longer a good idea. In fact, it may do more harm than good.

Instead, we know people need to be supported in a natural and practical way to feel safe and in control after an emergency or disaster.

What's most important during this time is that people have safety and comfort through practical support and resources, including food, shelter, money, and communication.

Did you know...

People who do better after disasters are those who are hopeful, positive and feel confident that life is predictable (or goes to plan).

It is also important to have supporters around you who can provide reassurance (by telling and showing you that everything is going to be okay) and who can help you with everyday living tasks during this time.

Sometimes we call this process Psychological First Aid.

Psychological First Aid is:

- **NOT debriefing**
- **NOT talking about traumatic experiences**
- **NOT counselling or something only professionals can do**

Also, Psychological First Aid is not something that everyone who has been involved in an emergency or disaster will need.

If you are a support person working through this guide with someone with a disability, you might like to read in more detail about how to provide Psychological First Aid. Read this guide from the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian Red Cross.

[Psychological First Aid: Supporting people affected by disaster in Australia](#)

Specific psychological strategies for coping with stress from emergency and disaster events

During times of stress or worry, there are many things we can do to help us to remain calm.

Below you will find a series of practical ideas you can try out and practice with the people you support. They may be useful the next time someone is feeling overwhelmed by a situation, such as an emergency or disaster.

Remember, practising deep breathing every day, even for one minute, is the best way to be prepared for stressful situations, including emergencies and disasters. It is the quickest go-to in our resilience tool kit.

Read this next part aloud to the person you're supporting.

Guided relaxation and breathing tasks

Slowing our breathing is the most helpful thing we can do when feeling stressed or overwhelmed by a situation. This makes sure we get enough oxygen to our brain, helping us to feel calm and in control.

Try these videos to support you with practising slow, deep breaths. Some of these only go for one minute. If you have ten minutes to spare, you might like to try the longer Guided Meditation for Relaxation.

[Breathe exercise](#)

This one-minute Headspace video is a brief, instructional introduction to deep breathing.

[Let go of stress exercise](#)

This one-minute Headspace video is a brief, instructional introduction to meditation.

[Leaves on a stream exercise](#)

This five-minute video is a guided exercise that focuses on slowing breathing and managing negative thoughts.

[Guided meditation for relaxation](#)

This ten-minute video can be used for practising deep breathing, de-stressing, and inducing a full state of relaxation.

Stop → Think → Act

The Stop-Think-Act method is a simple strategy for calming our thinking during times of stress or panic, before big emotions (like frustration and fear) start to grow.

It is most useful when you, or someone who supports you, notices the signs that you are beginning to feel stressed or upset.

Stopping and taking some breaths instantly calm our minds and can stop panic from growing.

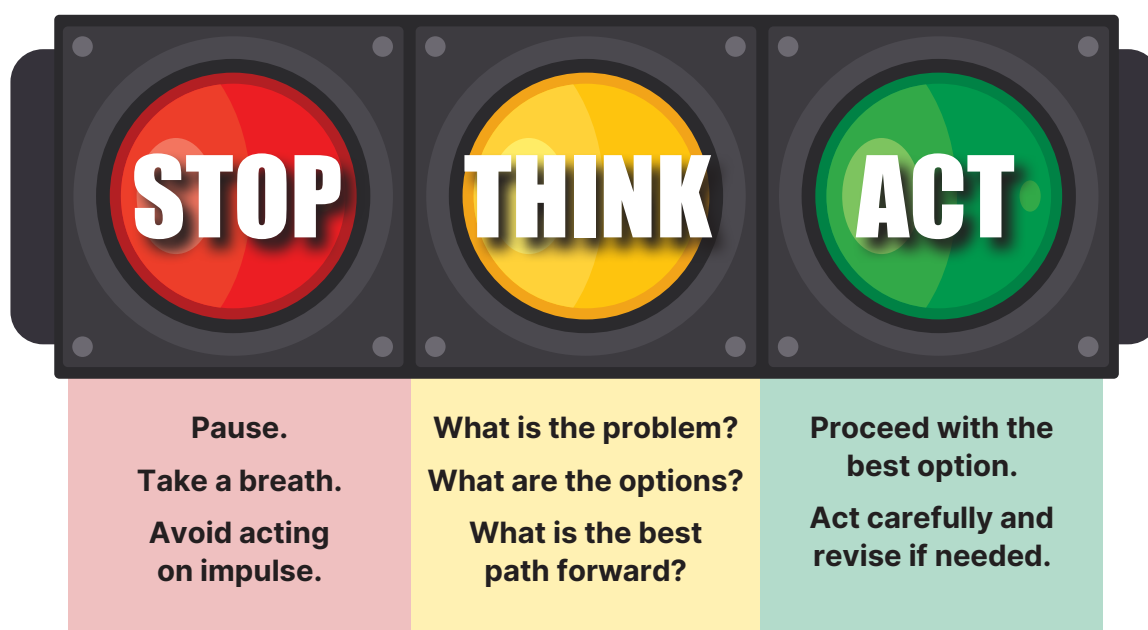
This allows us to think about things clearly, before we act and make the best choice we can in the situation we're experiencing.

Talk through the visual below with the person you support.

You could even work through a mock scenario such as this: "Imagine you had a big day at work and when you got home you felt tired and cranky. Imagine someone you live with then came to ask you if they could borrow something of yours and you didn't feel like sharing – instead, you felt like yelling at them to go away.

Knowing that we're feeling angry or upset is important. When we realise this, we can then stop and take some deep breaths. Then we can think about the situation (with support if needed) and choose words that are helpful, rather than yelling at someone. It can be as simple as telling the other person how we're feeling or that now is not a good time and that you will come and talk to them later or the next day".

STOP → THINK → ACT METHOD



Source: Life Skills Advocate

Suggested Sensory Tools

Sometimes it can be useful to calm our nerves or ease our stress using sensory tools.

These are items designed to slow our breathing and encourage relaxation, or to settle our thoughts and help us focus and feel in control.

Here are some examples you might like to suggest to the people you're supporting.

DIY Calm Down Bottle

This bottle is designed to show us what it's like in our bodies and our minds when we are feeling overwhelmed, anxious or have lots of feelings happening at the same time.

After you shake the bottle, you will see what's inside starts to settle and calm, just like our feelings do once they pass over us. We are reminded that calmness will return.

Click on the image to go to the Jellystone Design website for more ideas.

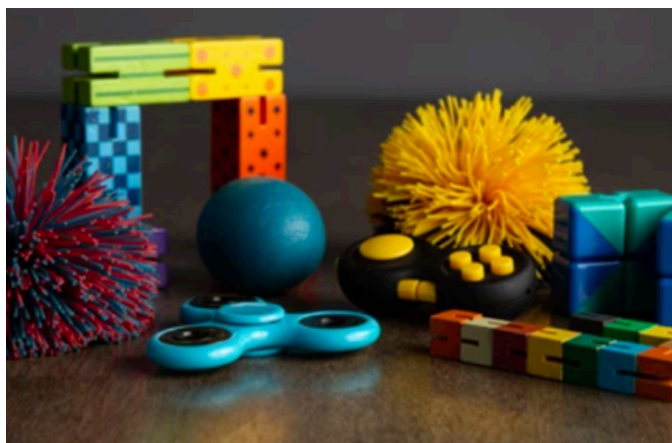


As an alternative option, you could make your own calm down bottle with a recycled, clear bottle with lid.

Fidgets

Fidgets come in lots of different shapes, textures, and colours. They can be useful for channelling nervous energy and encouraging calmness and focus.

Affordable fidgets are available in shops including Kmart, Big W and one dollar-type shops, as well as specialist sensory shops and online (e.g. Amazon).



Weighted Blanket

Weighted blankets are designed to encourage relaxation and quality sleep through deep touch pressure. The extra weight of the blanket slows breathing and heart rate, helping you to feel ready for rest.

Less expensive versions are available from Kmart, Target, and Amazon (online), with specialist bedding and sensory shops offering alternative premium products.

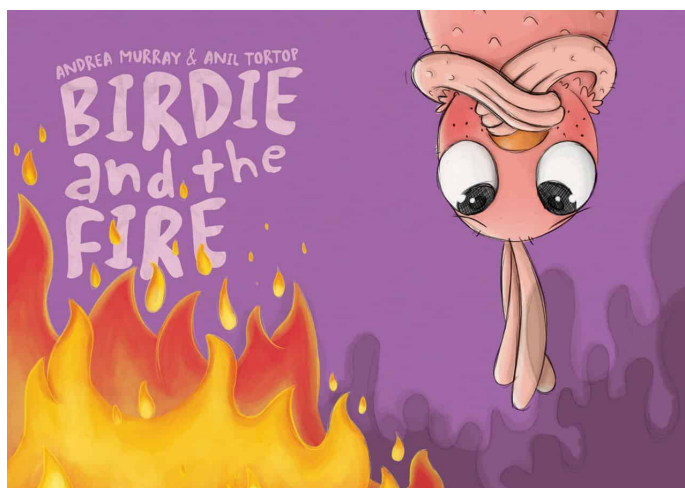


Emergency and Disaster Social Stories

Birdie's Tree storybooks and resources were designed to support children and families to understand and cope with emergencies and disasters, but they may also be useful for others.

Social stories like this tell us what to expect in a specific situation e.g. during a bushfire, flood, or pandemic, which can be helpful in reducing worry and stress.

The stories can be read online for free, or hard copies are available for \$10 each, plus shipping. Click on the image to go to the Queensland Government website.





What does resilience look like?

Read this aloud to the person you're supporting.

What is resilience?

Resilience is about being able to recover, or to bounce back, from difficult and challenging life events.

If you think about a piece of bamboo, it is very difficult to break. It bends in the wind, can be pushed and pushed again, and is firmly rooted in the ground. It is well supported and flexible.

Resilient people are like bamboo.

They face challenges like everyone does and no matter how hard the situation gets, they find a way to bounce back and to keep going.

Anyone can learn to become resilient. Like many things, it is a skill you can develop that gets better with practice.

What is disaster resilience?

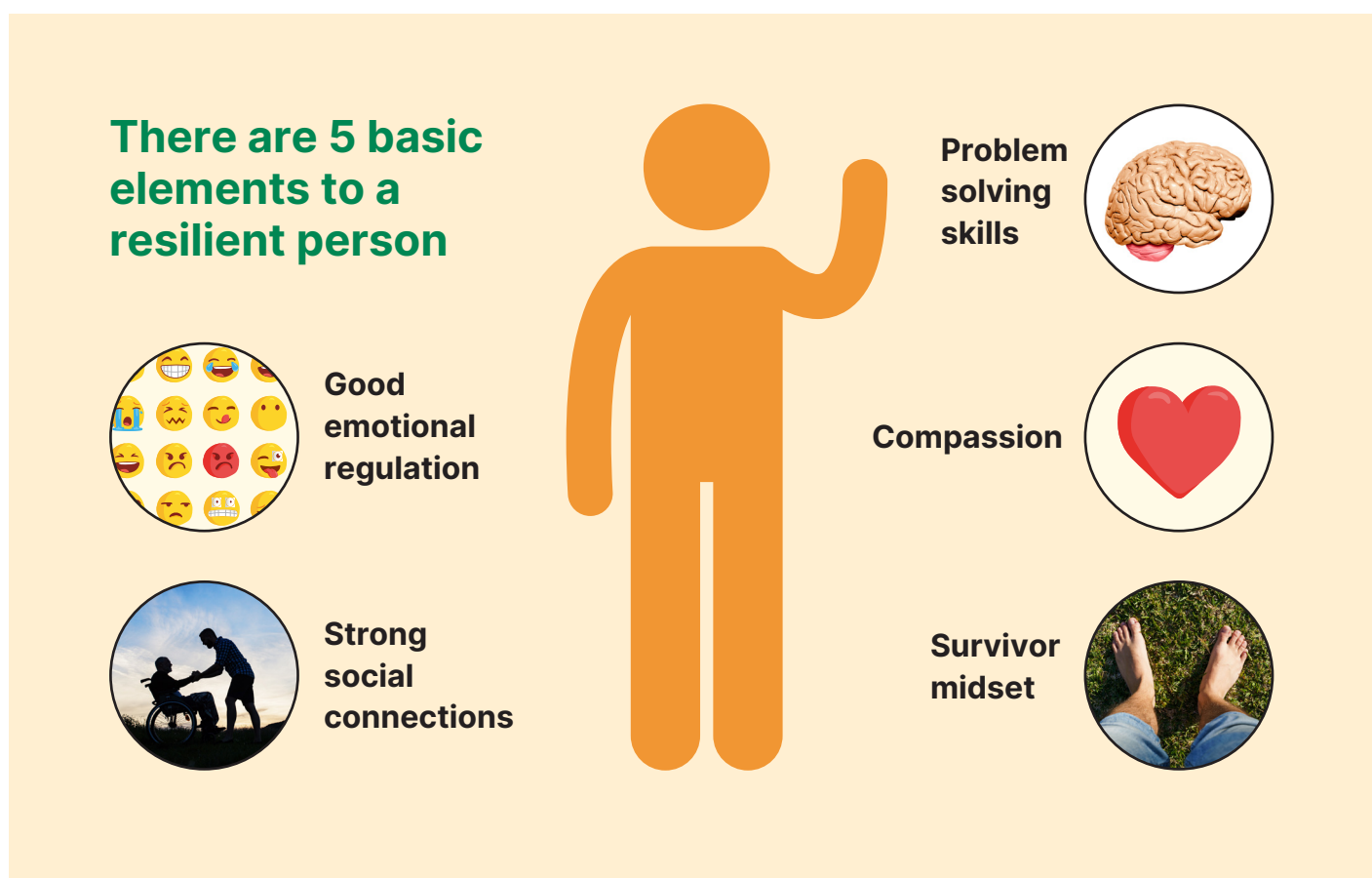
Disaster resilience is about being able to bounce back from having experienced an emergency or disaster.

Sometimes, it is described as a shared responsibility of individuals, communities, businesses, and government for getting things back to normal after an emergency or disaster event.

So, what does a resilient person look like?

A resilient person believes that their actions matter. They believe that the choices they make can help them to be in control of a situation and to help them through tricky situations.

While we know we can't control events like bushfires, floods, and pandemics, what we can control is how we think and feel about these things and the choices that we make to help us cope.



Did you know...

Resilience is a skill and something you can build on and get better at.

It is not something you either have or you don't.

A resilient person has:

- 1 Good emotional regulation** → they notice when their feelings change and find positive ways to cope with big feelings like frustration, fear, anger, and panic.
- 2 Problem solving skills** → they keep an open mind and come up with lots of ideas to problem situations.
- 3 Strong social connections** → they talk to their support people and keep connected.
- 4 Self-compassion** → they are kind to themselves and have positive self-talk (or thoughts about themselves). They are accepting of however they are feeling and are not hard on themselves.
- 5 A survivor mindset** → they keep their thoughts positive and think like someone who can get through anything. They feel like a survivor, not a victim.

Read this aloud to the person you're supporting.

Even as we build our skills of resilience (or being mentally tough) there will still be times when we don't feel our best.

What's important is that we recognise that we're feeling this way and we let someone know.

Possible signs that we're not feeling resilient or mentally tough include:

- Feeling irritable – being more annoyed or upset about little things than usual.
- Feeling overwhelmed – having a strong emotional reaction and feeling like you can't cope.
- Feeling stuck in your problems and not being able to find an answer or way through them.
- Having trouble sleeping or being relaxed.
- Being run down and having lots of small illnesses, like colds.
- Doing things that are unhealthy, like drinking too much soft drink or alcohol.

Please note: There may be other causes for symptoms such as these. If you're unsure, talk to your GP or a trusted support person in the first instance.

When we're not feeling our most resilience selves, this is the time to practice self care and to do those healthy activities that make us feel good.

On the next page you will find a *Self Care Activity*. This has been designed to make you more aware of those activities you do that give you energy and make you feel good.

These are things you can do regularly that will help you feel more resilient in your day to day life as well as in times of emergency and disaster.

Complete this template with the person you're supporting.

Self Care Activity	Physically (to do with my body)	Emotionally (to do with my feelings)	Mentally (to do with my thoughts)	Spiritually (to do with my being or self)
What activities give me energy and make me feel good?				
What activities take away my energy and make me feel low?				
What might give me more energy?				
What stops me from doing activities that give me energy?				
Next steps: What changes do I want to make from what I have learned here?				

Source: Adapted from Hewson's *Self Care Activity* (2011)

Some examples that you might put into each column:

Physical energy: Eating; Drinking; Sleeping; Exercise; Breaks; Relaxation.

Emotional energy: Talking to others; Hugs; Talking about your feelings; Feeling safe; Having down-time (relaxing).

Mental energy: Making a plan; Doing something creative; Doing a puzzle or an activity that challenges your brain; Getting mentally prepared; Thinking about something that's happened (reflecting).

Spiritual energy: Prayer or meditation; Practising deep breathing; Being kind to others; Spending time connecting with nature; Being quiet and still.

Read this with the person you're supporting and make sure to pause several times to ask if the person has any questions.

Case Study: Sally

Sally is a young woman with vision impairment and a mild intellectual disability. She lives by herself in her community, where she also works. Her family live 4 hours away but she has friends who live in the neighbouring suburbs.

In recent years, Sally has experienced the Covid-19 pandemic as well as some personally traumatic events, including the passing of her service dog.

As a result, she has become withdrawn – she's stopped talking to her friends and family – and she's gotten into some unhealthy habits (like drinking too much alcohol) to help her cope with everyday life.

Sally used to be a very resilient person. She had a positive attitude and was always hopeful.

Unfortunately, as Sally experienced the hardships of the pandemic and other trauma soon after, she stopped doing the things she would normally do and started to feel depressed.

Sally's friend of many years, Lisa knew something wasn't right with Sally.

It wasn't normal for Sally to not reply to her messages or take her calls. She also knew Sally had stopped going to work and was staying home instead.

Lisa could sense that things had gotten really bad for Sally and she knew she

needed to step in and to get Sally some professional help.

Lisa herself had recently seen a psychologist for some counselling and felt hopeful that Sally would benefit from receiving some help too.

When Lisa went to Sally's house, Sally was reluctant to let her in. Once inside, they sat down together and as Lisa started to talk, Sally burst into tears. Lisa hugged Sally and she did not let go for a long time.

It was clear that Sally had really been struggling and needed some help to find her old, resilient self.

With a lot of reassurance, Sally was able to visit her GP with Lisa, to talk about going to see a psychologist for some counselling and support.

One year down the track and Sally is looking after herself better than ever before. She's back at work, she connects with her friends regularly and she even has a new service dog, called Sam.

Sally still visits her psychologist every few months for a check-in, but overall, she feels in control of her life, and she knows she can cope with anything that comes her way.

She doesn't drink alcohol anymore – only on special occasions – and instead she calls Lisa when she's having a rough day, as well as putting her self care plan into action.

Encourage the person you are supporting to have a go at answering the following questions about Sally's case study.

Case Study Quiz:

1. Sally used to be a very resilient person. Why do you think this might have changed in recent times?
2. What were the things that Sally did that were unhelpful and made the situation harder for her?
(Hint: Think about her usual routine and the things she stopped doing. Also think about any unhealthy habits she might have started).
3. What did Lisa do to support Sally to get her life back on track?
4. What helpful things does Sally do now to keep herself happy and resilient?
(Hint: Think about who she connects with and what she does when she's having a bad day).

Want to check your answers?

Quiz answers are available at the end of this guide.

If working through this guide has brought up something that has caused you or someone you support distress, or if you are experiencing difficulties with your mental health at this time, please seek help from one of the services below:

Lifeline	Call 13 11 14 for crisis support.
13YARN	Call 13 92 76 for crisis support for Indigenous Australians.
Kids Helpline	Call 1800 55 1800 for crisis support for children and young people.
Mensline	Call 1300 789 978
Beyond Blue	Call 1300 224 636

For information on receiving bulk-billed counselling sessions from a psychologist, direct your staff to the Services Australia website: [Mental health care and Medicare](#).

Case Study Quizzes – ANSWERS PAGE

Case Study 1: Andrew

1. How did Andrew feel when he realised the bushfire was getting close to his house?

Andrew felt:

- Panicked
- Frightened
- Like he didn't know what to do (overwhelmed)
- Stressed
- Sick in his stomach

2. What was the first thing Andrew did when he knew he needed help?

Andrew went next door to speak to his neighbour.

He had wanted to call his parents, but they were away on holiday. Luckily, he knew his first back up person was his neighbour.

3. What were 2 things Andrew's neighbour did to support him with the situation?
(Hint: First she helped him with his feelings and thoughts. Then she helped him to do something practical that would help him feel in control of the situation)

Andrew's neighbour:

- Got him a cold drink and sat down with him in a comfortable, safe space
- Listened to his concerns and spoke calmly back to him
- Reminded him that he was prepared for the situation and reassured him they would continue to call his parents
- Wrote a simple list of things that needed to be done
- Supported Andrew to contact his support worker

4. What do you think Andrew learned from this situation that might be helpful in another emergency or disaster situation?

Andrew learned that he was prepared for a real-life disaster situation and that he could remember what to do, even when he felt worried and stressed.

He also learned that he was able to cope in a disaster or emergency situation, and that he would be able to do it again if he needed to.

Andrew was reminded that it is important to ask for help when you need it and that you will get the support you need.

5. Do you think Andrew is resilient? Why or why not?

Yes, Andrew is resilient. He coped with a stressful situation, even though it was challenging. He also knows now he can do it, and he'll be able to do it again if the need arises.

Case Study Quizzes – ANSWERS PAGE

Case Study 2: Sally

1. Sally used to be a very resilient person. Why do you think this might have changed in recent times?

Sally experienced a number of hardships in a short space of time.

First there was the Covid-19 pandemic (which was especially challenging given she has vision impairment), and she also lost her service dog and experienced other trauma.

2. What were the things that Sally did that were unhelpful and made the situation harder for her? (Hint: Think about her usual routine and the things she stopped doing. Also think about any unhealthy habits she might have started).

- Sally stopped going to work.
- She also stopped seeing her friends.
- Sally became withdrawn and stayed at home all the time.
- She also started drinking lots of alcohol.

3. What did Lisa do to support Sally to get her life back on track?

- When Sally stopped answering Lisa's phone calls and texts, Lisa went to her house to check on her.
- Lisa listened to Sally, without judgment.
- Lisa told Sally about her own experience and provided reassurance.
- Lisa supported Sally to visit her GP (a good first step), who helped Sally to find a psychologist to speak to.

4. What helpful things does Sally do now to keep herself happy and resilient?

(Hint: Think about who she connects with and what she does when she's having a bad day).

- Sally stays connected with the people in her life that care about her – particularly her friends.
- On bad days, Sally doesn't drink alcohol and instead, calls Lisa for a chat.
- Sally went back to her usual routine, including going to work.
- Sally continues to see her psychologist, just to check-in that she's doing okay.
- Sally has a self care plan that she sticks to – she makes sure she does helpful and healthy things that make her feel good and relax.