

# Flood

## Is this really like loss and grief?

Any natural disasters create loss in our lives. And when we experience loss, it's natural that we'll grieve - it's a normal human response to any event that turns our life upside down.

Whether it's flood, fire, earthquake or other, it's not only about the loss of personal possessions, documents, treasures, mementos and family history. It's about the loss of personal safety and our belief in a world that's predictable and within our control. There's also the loss of financial security or what represents years of hard work, hopes and dreams - it's all gone in an instant. It makes no sense, it's unjust, not fair. It's like a kick in the guts.

And so we grieve over what we've lost but if you think the word *grief* is too depressing or 'in your face', I'll just list some common reactions you might relate to...

### Feelings

- Devastation
- Anger
- Sadness
- Helplessness
- Numbness
- Scared
- Overwhelmed
- Depressed

### Thoughts

- Life will never be the same
- I'll never get over this
- Don't know how to start over
- It's not fair
- Why me?
- I'm not OK, it's all too much
- I just want to give up
- One day at a time

### Behaviours

- Shock, disbelief
- Panic, on edge all the time, can't relax
- Can't think straight
- No motivation to do anything
- Aggression - just want to lash out
- Pretending to be OK (when you're not really OK)

### Health & Well-being

- Anxiety, panic attacks
- Can't eat or sleep
- Self-medication - drugs, alcohol
- Heart palpitations
- Nervous rash
- Sick in the stomach
- Fatigue

### Some tips for coping

- Give yourself permission to be out of sorts, anxious, scared or whatever you're feeling.
- There's no prize for being strong or brave. It's better to be real about how you're feeling. Remember it's OK to not be OK and if you own up to this, you'll probably find there are many others feeling the same.
- Try not to compare yourself to others. Even in the same family, everyone will react differently. There's no right or wrong way to feel, there's only *your* way.
- Try to balance your thinking - yes, it's OK to think this is the worst thing that's ever happened, but you could also think, *I'm going to do just one thing every day to start to pick up the pieces.*
- Ask for help. Talk to someone who will just listen. You don't need advice right now or someone who wants to cheer you up. What helps is someone who'll let you vent or cry or say the things you want to get off your chest.

### SUPPORT

Lifeline on 13 11 14  
Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800  
Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636

Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467  
Headspace on 1800 650 890  
MensLine Australia on 1300 789 978