

Do I have a problem?

The after-effects of a traumatic event like the February 2009 bushfires are not always immediately visible or apparent.

Sometimes they become obvious - at other times we might not even realise what effect they are having on us or the people around us.

How do I recognise the effects?

Symptoms or signs of after-effects include ongoing:

- tiredness, fatigue or feeling low
- changes in appetite or weight
- poor concentration or difficulty making decisions
- feelings of restlessness or being 'on edge'
- persistent anger or violent tendencies
- withdrawal from family and social activities
- insomnia or other sleeping difficulties
- feelings of helplessness or being unable to carry on
- other persistent mental or emotional issue.

What help can I access?

The Federal Government has funded a counselling program known as [Access to Allied Psychological Services \(or ATAPS\)](#) specifically for bushfire survivors.

This program provides up to 6 FREE sessions with a trained counselling professional - more if required after a review with your GP.



Talking about it WILL make a difference...

'Unburdening' your concerns to someone outside your immediate situation will help you:

- 'unload' in a safe and supportive situation.
- discuss different ways to handle particular problems, concerns or issues.
- better understand the effects of your experience.
- recognise the positive things you have been doing to help yourself and those around you.

What is involved?

These sessions take place within the region you live. Each session takes about an hour. All sessions are totally confidential and conducted under strict professional guidelines.

What if I don't want to continue?

There is no need to attend all 6 sessions - that's for you, your GP and counsellor to determine.

What does it cost?

Nothing. It is a **FREE service** when referred by a GP or Victorian Bushfire Case Manager.

How do I access this service?

Simply discuss an ATAPS referral with your (or any) GP or Victorian Bushfire Case Manager.

If they are not familiar with the ATAPS program they can contact the Central Highlands General Practice Network (CHGPN) on (03) 5428 4848.

What if I don't have a regular Doctor?

For referral to a GP:

...simply contact the CHGPN (Christine Borg, GP Consultant - Community Health Care) on (03) 5428 4848.

For referral to a Case Manager:

...simply contact the Victorian Bushfire Case Management Service on 1800 050 400 and they will assign your own personal Case Manager to assist you in the process.

Is there any follow up?

Just a follow up appointment with your GP to review the value of these sessions, and refer for additional sessions if they are required.

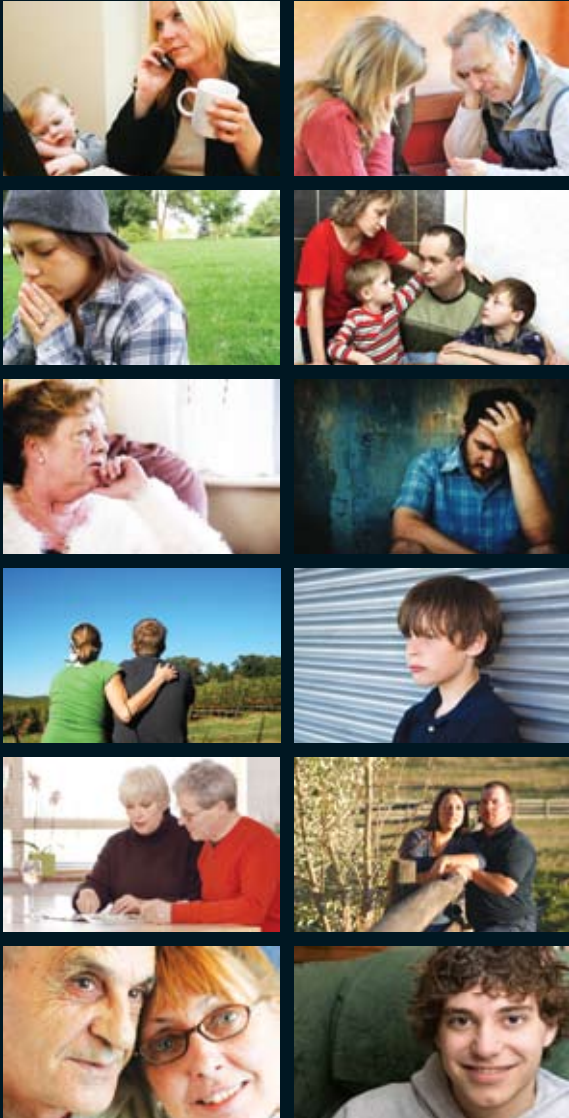
I'm not sure about all this ...who can I talk to?

Simply contact the [Central Highlands GP Network](#) on (03) 5428 4848 and they will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

If you have any issues, concerns or complaints about services you have received through the ATAPS program please contact CHGPN.

Who can use this service?

This support service is
FREE OF CHARGE to ANYONE
whose mental or emotional wellbeing
may have been affected by
their bushfire experience.



Other helpful services...

For domestic violence counselling and referral...

Confidential Line: 1800 156 789

For drug and alcohol related issues...

Direct Line: 1800 888 789

*For support for family members of people
who misuse alcohol and other drugs...*

Family Drug and Alcohol Help: 1300 660 068

For counselling for loss and grief...

Griefline: (03) 9596 7799 (12pm-3pm, 7 days a week)

*For counselling for children and
young people up to the age of 25...*

Kids Help Line: 1800 551 800

For general telephone counselling...

Lifeline: 131 114

*For counselling for men with
family and relationship concerns...*

Mensline Australia: 1300 78 99 78

For crisis counselling, support and information...

SuicideLine (Victoria): 1300 651 251

ACCESS TO ALLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (ATAPS)

Funded by the Australian Government's
Department of Health and Ageing

...A PROGRAM MANAGED BY:

Central Highlands
GENERAL PRACTICE NETWORK

Contact: Christine Borg
GP Consultant - Community Health Care
Phone: (03) 5428 4848
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Talking about it **WILL** make a difference...



ACCESS TO ALLIED PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (ATAPS)

A FREE support service for those affected by bushfire.