



Disaster Support Groups Workshop Western Australian Fires



We are seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified mental health professionals interested in volunteering to run disaster support groups for people who have been affected by a disaster.

Social support is key to recovery post disaster. Disaster support groups are a valuable aid to psychosocial recovery. They enable people in similar situations to share knowledge, experience, and psychosocial support with each other.

Australian Red Cross and the APS are partnering to run a disaster support group workshop for mental health professionals with experience in running groups, who also have experience in disaster recovery or other areas of traumatic stress or grief.

After the workshop we may ask you to volunteer time to facilitate monthly support groups of 1 1/2 to 2 hours as part of Red Cross Psychosocial Recovery programs if the need arises. In the event of a disaster affecting a particular region, these groups might involve travel to rural communities and may need to be in the evening. Experience in other states indicates they may be required for more than a year as various issues arise in the course of recovery. Please consider if you can commit this time when deciding whether you would like to participate; continuity is essential to the groups' effectiveness. People conducting such groups have found them a unique, creative and deeply satisfying professional experience.

We will be running two workshops in Western Australia

BUSSELTON Monday 29 th June, 1pm to 5pm. Community Resource Centre on the corner of Camilleri Street and Harris Road, Busselton.	PERTH Tuesday 30 th June, 1pm to 5pm. Perth Red Cross office, 110 Goderich St, East Perth
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The workshop will be facilitated by Dr Susie Burke FAPS, the APS senior psychologist for Disaster Response. Susie has been training mental health professionals in post-disaster recovery and mental health since the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria. Over the last 2 years Susie has been coordinating the APS/Red Cross disaster support group workshops.

The training will include an orientation to working in the disaster context, core principles of support groups, and practical information about running support groups following a disaster in Australia.

There is no fee for the workshop, which is likely to be claimable for CPD points.

Since the disaster support groups are an intervention targeted at psychological recovery, it is important that the Group Facilitators are able to discuss and answer questions about mental health issues in a credible and authoritative manner.

- Essential: A post-graduate qualification in a mental health area
 A minimum of 3 years clinical experience in mental health and/or counselling
 Experience in running groups
- Desirable: Experience in disaster recovery or other areas of traumatic stress.

If you think you would be suitable and can commit to conducting support groups following a disaster, please confirm your attendance at this workshop including an up-to-date CV, by emailing us at drn@psychology.org.au.