

20 November 2008

## **DISTRESS A NORMAL REACTION TO STORMS**

South East Queenslanders hit by storms and floods have been urged to be alert to the emotional impacts of disaster.

Queensland Health Senior Director of Mental Health Dr Aaron Groves said distress was an understandable and a normal response to disasters, such as the storms and floods that have hit South East Queensland this week.

“Common causes of distress may be related to having been directly at risk from the storms, being concerned about family and friends, witnessing injuries and distress to others, or being caught up in the panic and confusion that often follows,” he said.

“In addition, feelings and memories related to previous experiences of disasters or other grief and loss may also resurface.

Dr Groves said most people under acute stress during such events managed with courage and strength.

“However, sometimes it is only later when the distressing images are recalled that some of the stressful effects start to show.”

While most people will manage with the support of family and friends, there are times when extra help and support may be needed. There are three important things you need to know:

- normal reactions to this type of emergency
- positive ways of coping
- when to get extra help.

Dr Groves said normal reactions to a disaster included:

- shock and numbness, often fear at first
- horror and grief when the extent of loss is realised
- frustration, anger, helplessness and even sometimes despair when it all seems too much
- sometimes fears or old worries may resurface.

“These feelings usually settle over the early weeks. If any of these feelings are ongoing it is important that you seek assistance,” he said.

“Help and information can be obtained from your general practitioner, your local Community Health Centre or your local Mental Health Service.”

Help and information can be obtained from:

- your general practitioner
- local Community Health Centre or Mental Health Service.

Or call:

- [13 Health](#) (13 43 25 84) for qualified non-urgent health advice. Always call 000 in an emergency.
- Lifeline's 24 Hour Crisis Counselling Line is taking crisis calls from those affected by the storms and floods on 13 11 14.

**ENDS**

**For further information:**

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