

ACT Supreme Court Compensation Hearing regarding the 2003 Bushfires

Managing your Personal Responses

Residents of Canberra and surrounding areas will be aware that the ACT Supreme Court Compensation Hearing regarding the 2003 Bushfires has now commenced, and as a result will be covered in the media for a number of weeks or months.

Hearing about or viewing media reports of the hearing may result in a degree of anxiety or distress for some people. For most people these thoughts and feelings will be manageable, and cause little disruption in their lives.

Others may find these thoughts and feelings more unsettling and may experience some of the following:

- Feeling more tense and nervous than usual.
- Sleep problems.
- Crying often or easily.
- Wanting to be alone more than usual.
- Drinking alcohol or taking drugs more often or excessively.
- Feeling numb.
- Being angry or irritable.
- Feeling unsafe.

For the majority of people these thoughts and feelings will resolve or lessen over a few days. Others may experience increasing worry or distress and may find it difficult to cope with their normal routine. These people should consult their G.P.

Positive Coping

There are a number of strategies that can help reduce distress and anxiety. These include:

- Support one another, especially your family, friends and neighbourhood community.
- Share your feelings with others if this feels the right thing to do.
- Look after your own and your family's general health, and maintain normal routines, exercise and rest.
- Avoid reading or looking at stories in the media about the bushfires.
- Ask for information and help.

Where to obtain Help or Advice

Your General Practitioner.

Lifeline (24 hrs) 131114.

Your School Counsellor.

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800.

Parentline (02) 6287 3833.

Mental Health ACT Triage 1800 629 354

The Employee Assistance Program (if one is available in your workplace)

Web-based Resources

http://www.ehub.anu.edu.au/pdf/webservices_flier.pdf

Related information and fact sheets can be found at:

http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/community_recovery/emergency_factsheets