

# Bushfire Mental Health Support

The anniversary of a traumatic event can prompt a range of physical, mental, emotional and behavioural issues, here are a series of symptoms to watch out for as we approach the 10th anniversary of the Black Saturday Fires of February 2009.

## **You may come across people in your community exhibiting symptoms such as:**

- Low mood, brittle emotions, tearfulness
- Somatic complaints (headaches, difficulty sleeping, eating, weight loss/gain)
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Flashbacks or unwanted reoccurring memories or bad dreams relating to the initial events
- Difficulty focusing attention and concentration
- Feeling numb, detached or withdrawn
- Fear of impending summer season
- Resentment or blaming others
- Insomnia
- Increased substance use
- 'Replaying' the event and inventing different outcomes.

If you believe someone is experiencing re-traumatisation, please refer them to their local health practitioner or seek online support through [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au). You can also call the Australian Primary Mental Health Alliance on 1300 514 811.

**Lifeline can also be contacted on 13 11 14.**

For Health Practitioners, please refer to the Referral Pathway document.