

What people have said about other groups

"I felt the group was fantastic for me. It was very hard, but it was great to be with people who were feeling the same things I was feeling."

"My life now is as though I am walking down a long dark tunnel; since attending the support group, I am still walking down that dark tunnel, but now there are people beside me and there are lights along the way."

"It is good being in the group because we are all in the same basic situation. We are understood without having to explain ourselves too much. Group members are mostly good listeners and good supporters."

"I really got a lot out of the group, and it was an important part of my grief journey and helped in different ways at different stages along the way."

"The secret of support groups...you take your broken heart and wounded spirit and lean over the proverbial backyard fence with a cup of coffee in your hand and talk to a fellow survivor about the things you could not share with anyone else on earth."

"At times of crisis and loss, there is something special about meeting and talking with others in the same situation. Helping and being helped by other people with whom one shares a common experience seems to provide an opportunity to feel hope and see new possibilities for the future."

Further Information

ACGB Bereavement Counselling and Support Service

Address: Ground Floor, McCulloch House,
Monash Medical Centre,
246 Clayton Road,
Clayton Vic 3168

Phone: **03 9265 2111 (Monday - Friday)**

Facsimile: 03 9265 2150

Email: counselling@grief.org.au

Web Address: www.grief.org.au

The Australian Centre For Grief and Bereavement (ACGB) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which provides a range of education, training, research and professional service options for those working in the area of grief and bereavement. The ACGB is also funded by the Department of Human Services to provide a statewide specialist bereavement service for individuals, children and families who need assistance following the death of someone close to them.

For information on training or other services, contact the Australian Centre For Grief and Bereavement on (03) 9265 2100 or Freecall 1800 642 066.

24 Hour Telephone Support

Lifeline	13 11 14
Suicide Line	1300 651 251
Mensline	1300 789 978
Kids Help Line	1800 551 800
Parentline	13 22 89
NURSE-ON-CALL	1300 60 60 24

Bereaved parents and families support:

- The Compassionate Friends - 1800 641 091

Dated July 2009

BUSHFIRE DISCUSSION AND SUPPORT GROUPS

For people who have lost someone close to them



"It has helped me so much with so many things ... I had a lot of issues with my anger. Just talking to others opens your eyes. I really like the way you can talk about a problem and get feedback and suggestions from the group."



BUSHFIRE DISCUSSION AND SUPPORT GROUPS

For people who have lost someone close to them

The recent Victorian bushfires have had an enormous and devastating impact, unprecedented in Victoria, particularly for those people most directly affected. People directly affected by the bushfires confront issues that are beyond the comprehension and experience of most ordinary Australians. It is difficult for those not directly affected to understand the trauma, the loss and grief that people have experienced, and continue to experience.

People recovering from major losses and disasters have often found it helpful and comforting to meet together in groups with others who share similar losses and experiences.

Who are these groups for?

These groups are for adults who have lost someone close to them in the Victorian bushfires. This may be a child, a young person, a close relative, friend or neighbour. Similar groups for children and young people can be arranged as required.

When and where do the groups meet?

The groups are being held in locations in fire affected communities and in Melbourne. Daytime and evening groups are available.

It is expected that the groups will continue to be available for 18 months or more. For details of the groups available please contact the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement. (Details on back page.)

What is the format of the groups?

Groups will consist of up to 12 people who meet together regularly to talk over their experiences. The groups provide an opportunity for people to share their stories and experiences with others who have had similar experiences, to support and help each other, and to learn about recovering from grief and trauma. An experienced facilitator will be present to assist the group. The groups are non-religious and non-denominational.

The groups normally adjust their meetings to suit the members. By continuing to meet and get to know each other, a group of people are often able to assist each other emotionally as well as with practical advice. This helps to make the journey easier and people feel less isolated.

How can a group help me?

Discussion and support groups can help give a real sense of understanding, acceptance, support and hope, because everyone else in the group has had a similar experience and understands the magnitude of what has happened and what you are going through. People share experiences that are not readily understood by others who have not been through these experiences. You can share ideas and strategies about how to deal with difficult issues and encourage and support each other.

Who are the facilitators?

The facilitators are qualified professionals, trained and experienced in assisting people who have experienced a major loss or disaster, and who have been selected by the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement.

Discussion and support groups are part of a range of recovery services for people affected by the Victorian bushfires, and are offered as one of the options that you may find helpful.

If you are interested in hearing more about these groups and how they may assist you, please contact:

**Australian Centre for Grief and
Bereavement on
9265 2111**

**(Bereavement Counselling and
Support Service)**

or email:

support@grief.org.au

**or talk with your case manager or
counsellor.**

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement is working with the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority and the Department of Human Services to provide these groups.