

Free counselling and support for Victorian families affected by the February 2009 bushfires

Early in 2009, Victoria experienced devastating bushfires – families lost loved ones, homes, livelihoods and livestock. Many children and young people experienced events that most adults cannot conceive of, and their lives will never be the same.

Kids Helpline knows that overcoming significant stress and trauma can take time. Kids from 5 to 25 years have been contacting us for 19 years to access our telephone and on-line counselling. This year, through the Victorian bushfires and the Queensland floods, we have been working with lots of young Australians experiencing post-traumatic stress symptoms. Some of these young people will need continued support for years to come.

Counselling and support for parents and children

Kids Helpline is now offering special counselling services to help Victorian parents support their children. Parents can access support, education and counselling through the BoysTown Counselling Centre.

Our counsellors are tertiary qualified, trained and experienced to respond to the special needs being experienced by Australians this year. We also offer the ability to connect to the same counsellor again. The goal for us is to make sure that all family members affected by the bushfires - children, young people, parents, grandparents and carers - are able to access help, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Find out more about our telephone, email and online counselling by [visiting our website](#).

Additional online resources for parents, young people and children

Kids Helpline has also recently developed a number of pages on its website to assist young people and families impacted by the bushfires. Age appropriate information has been developed on each of the three micro sites for kids, teenagers and adults, including:

- **Tip sheets** - on grief and loss, depression and resilience
- **Helpful resources** – links to useful resources on other websites, such as tip sheets and fact sheets
- **Services for Victorians** – a database to locate relevant services in Victoria
- **Victorian bushfire links** – links to helpful websites on issues such as money, legal issues, housing, community news and events, sport and recreation, emotional support and animal care.

You can access this content by clicking on the links below:

[Information for kids](#)

[Information for teens](#)

[Information for adults](#)

Promotional material

We have a number of brochures and promotional materials for the Kids Helpline service and specifically for supporting Victorian families who were affected by the bushfires.

These vital services are of little value if children, young people and families do not know of them. Please ensure that this information is available for students and families at your school who may want to make use of our services. We are happy to supply stock at no charge and you can order materials by simply completing and returning our [Promotional Material Order Form](#).

Thank you for helping us give people across Victoria access to support and counselling.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Protheroe
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Counselling Services

<http://www.boystown.com.au>

<http://www.kidshelp.com.au>