



BUSHFIRE RECOVERY SERIES

Tips on taking time for pleasurable activities after disaster.

Disasters often disrupt routines or activities that have given people pleasure and a sense of control in the past, and people often don't make as much time as they used to for fun things. These recreational activities might have been sport, clubs or classes, walks or bike rides, visits to a favourite café, board games with the family, or regular get togethers with friends. These tips may get you back to activities you once enjoyed so as to increase your sense of control, purpose in life and for giving pleasure.

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Increase your activity. This is one of the most successful ways of improving people's mood, giving them a 'lift', and restoring a sense of control.
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Find a new balance between work and pleasure. With lives unbalanced by a disaster it becomes important not to be consumed with work. When you 'down tools' for a while and take time out for a bit of fun, you will probably pick up again when you're a little more rested, and you may even find you make quicker progress with all of those jobs.
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Create routines. By taking a break and engaging in pleasurable activities it can give you a break from the everyday stress of cleaning up, rebuilding and recovery and rebuild some normal routines and a sense of wellbeing.
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Increase pleasurable activities. They have a large impact on our overall health by contributing to our happiness as well as improving our mental health.
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Plan ahead. So you have things to look forward to, your able to stay focussed and you are more likely to engage in pleasurable activities if they have been planned. Plus other people need notice to be available to catch up and be involved.
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Include social connections. Balancing social connections with your pleasurable activities can be a great combination. It can be easier to talk and share with people when you are busy doing something together.
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Have more positive experiences than negative. By increasing the ratio of positive to negative experiences people live healthier, vibrant and flourishing lives whereby they become naturally more resilient to adversity and effortlessly achieve their goals.
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Give yourself permission. Take time out of the huge job ahead and do some of the things you may have enjoyed in the past – watching a DVD, having a day at the football, going out of a night with the girls (or boys), or just playing a game of scrabble.
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Be patient. You may find as you start picking up some of the activities you once enjoyed before the fires, that you're not enjoying them as much as you used to. This is very normal. And not a reason to give up. Sometimes after very traumatic experiences people's ability to enjoy themselves is diminished for the present. It can and will come back.

Reference: Australian Psychological Society, 2020. "Australian bushfires 2020: Psychological preparation and recovery." <https://www.psychology.org.au/Australian-bushfires-2020>

If you would like to book an appointment and /or speak with one of our Counsellors, it's as easy as calling 1300 66 77 00 or visit our website www.accesswellbeingservices.com.au

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