

When things go wrong

Who cares for the carer?

Peer Support in the Uniting Church in Australia



UNITING CHURCH DISASTER RECOVERY

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES BEYOND DISASTER THROUGH THE PROVISION OF:

- Peer Support of Ministry agents and congregations
- Coordinating Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy
- Grants to disaster-affected people
- Community-based recovery projects

When things go wrong

A critical incident is: A sudden disturbing or unusually challenging event that generates a strong emotional and cognitive reaction, often described as a “crisis” that is outside the usual range of experiences.

Compassion fatigue is: Often encountered longer term by carers in crisis-affected communities as the demands become too great and their capacity to cope is challenged.

How might these affect me? This has the potential to:

- create strong emotional reactions;
- overwhelm day-to-day coping skills; and/or
- interfere with the ability to function normally
- Create tensions and difficulties within a ministry setting.

Who cares for the carers?

A Peer Supporter is ready to come alongside you and offer a non-judgemental listening ear, some practical help to work with you and find ways forward.

Peers operate under a code of ethics and place a high value on confidentiality.



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



When things go wrong

Sometimes things go wrong.

A critical incident such as fire, flood, storm or accident damages a community and people find themselves wondering where to look for help and what to do next.

Ministry agents need help too

At times like this people often look to the church for help and hope, but ministers and church leaders are a part of the community which has been affected. They need care too because they:

- are themselves affected by what is impacting their community
- often don't know how to integrate with governments' emergency arrangements and welfare, or understand community recovery
- get tired and need a hand

This is where Peer Support comes in.

What is Peer Support?

Peer Support is about one person coming alongside another with some real understanding and empathy, bringing some practical assistance and resources.

Peer Support team

Peer Supporters operate within some Synods of the Uniting Church. These are ministers who have experienced life in times of crisis, including disaster settings, and have a heart to come beside other ministers and church leaders as they, in turn, care for disaster or emergency affected congregations and communities.

“A crisis shared is a crisis halved.”

The Peer Support Team is trained and coordinated by the Synod . Peer Supporters respond to situations where an emergency or crisis is likely to bring some level of stress to ministry agents or congregations.

“Peer Supporters bring listening ears and helping hands.”

Peer Supporters do not take over or disempower local ministry agents.

An example...

A flood causes widespread damage in a rural community. The parish area is cut in two. A peer visits the key leaders of a congregation and offers:

- practical support to do what is needed at the time
- knowledge of disaster relief processes
- links to ongoing pastoral support through the wider church
- planning skills to enable the church to plan for long-term community recovery

Why We Do This

The Church is the body of Christ; when one member or one minister is experiencing hardship, all are affected.

I can do all this through Him who gives me strength. Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles.

(Philippians 4:13-14)

Contact

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