

## Big Situations – Tips for Responding Now



You may be looking at this resource because of a 'big situation' currently being experienced, or you may be looking to prepare and build the capacity of your team for a 'big situation' that may occur.

### Before you do anything... safety comes first

If you are experiencing a 'big situation' now...

- ▶ Keep everyone safe. Avoid injuries or harm by making your site physically safe and promoting a calm environment as much as possible.
- ▶ Follow the directions of emergency services.
- ▶ Follow regulatory requirements and implement relevant policies, including informing management, and your [Regulatory Authority](#) where needed e.g. critical incident or service closure.
- ▶ Be ready to say no if people ask you to do things that are outside your scope or that could be harmful for children and calmly explain why.
- ▶ Seek or ask for help as needed.

### Tips for Responding Now

#### Maintain routines and rhythms

Children benefit from consistency. You can help them feel safe by continuing to do things the way you usually would. Acknowledge events and how children feel, but also provide the usual play opportunities and experiences.

#### Encourage connections and conversations

Children process experiences through play and interactions with people they trust. Children will connect through play, and conversations about big situations may happen as they play. Adults may need more encouragement and structure, so create opportunities for this where you can, or encourage families and your team members to access community supports and networks where relevant. People especially benefit from support from those they already know and trust.

#### Link to specialist services when necessary

In a crisis, practical help (e.g. housing, food, finances) is usually what is needed first. Not everyone needs counselling or psychological assistance. Be aware of people who are distressed, especially those whose distress continues over time, as they may need specialist help.

#### Take care of yourself

Big situations often bring up big feelings, at the time and also afterwards. Helping others can be demanding and tiring. Being part of a supportive team can really help. Sometimes it helps to set priorities and accept that you can't do what you would usually

do. Accessing professional support (such as Employee Assistance Program) can help especially if an incident brings up feelings from your own past, or you feel uncertain, overwhelmed or burdened by your role in the situation.

**Next time:**

After responding to a big situation, it's helpful to review how you and your team have coped. If you want to be better prepared for big situations that may happen in the future, you might like to access the [Community Trauma Tool Kit](#) (Emerging Minds) and/or sign up for [National Mental Health Education Initiative](#) (Be You) to help you develop a positive, inclusive and resilient learning community. You can also seek support to plan for the future by contacting your Inclusion Professional or [contact us](#) to send us an email.

**Please remember:**

An Inclusion Professional can support educators to proactively prepare to have the skills and confidence to respond to big situations that may occur. This preparation could include support to use the [Big Situations](#) resource and may involve strategic inclusion planning. It should be noted that big situations often require support from experts that sit outside the role and expertise of the Inclusion Professional. Inclusion Professionals can help you connect with external organisations and agencies as needed.

**Note:** Should any of this information or the big situation you are experiencing cause distress for you, it may be helpful to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14, Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 or the Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800.

**Disclaimer:** Links within this resource provide a starting point for accessing support and resources. Access the [Big Situations](#) online for additional information.