

WEATHER THE STORM

Supporting women to
prepare for disasters
and emergencies

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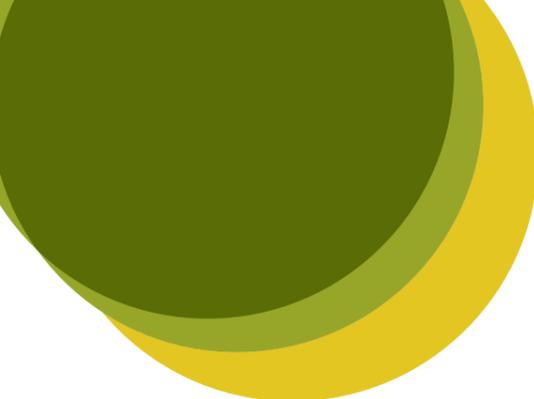
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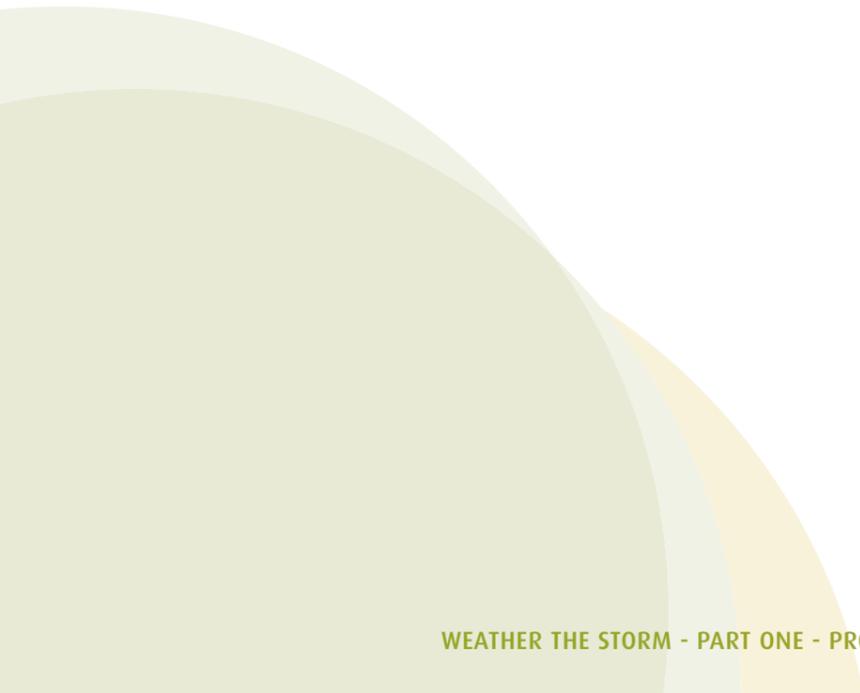
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- 2 Place this manual into an A4 folder
- 3 Add resources that are relevant to your own community
- 4 Keep in a handy place!



Section One:
**ABOUT
WEATHER
THE STORM**



This section provides you with important background information about Weather the Storm, including how to use this manual, information about natural disasters in Australia and the core values of the program. It is important that you read this section carefully before you start organising your own program.

ABOUT THIS MANUAL

The Australian Government Office for Women funded the National Rural Women's Coalition to develop a program bringing women together to share ideas, experiences and beliefs about living with the risk of disasters. The program was developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders and was trialed in three Australian communities.

This manual sets out how to design and deliver the Weather the Storm program for other communities and groups of women. It can be used by anyone, however some skills or awareness of group facilitation would be useful.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the following people and organisations that made the development of this manual possible:

Project Working Group

- Amanda Lavarack – Mackay Regional Council, QLD
- Anna Larkin, State Emergency Service (Vic)
- Christine Eriksen, Bushfire Researcher, University of Wollongong
- Di DeLaine – South Australian Rural Solutions
- Emma Bennett and Sally McCarron – City of Whittlesea, Victoria
- Frankie Maclennan – Department of Sustainability and Environment (Vic)
- Heather Crawley, Australian Emergency Management Institute (AEMI),
- Attorney – General's Department
- Helen Goodman, Inquiring practitioner
- Holly Foster – Fire Services Commissioner (Vic)
- Karina Coates and Loren Hackett – Red Cross Australia
- Sandra Stoddart, National Rural – Women's Coalition

- Tal Fitzpatrick – Volunteering Queensland
- Tracey Wilson – Consultant, Working Visions, Mission Beach, QLD

This is an amazingly talented and dedicated group of women who contributed to the development and delivery of the program in a myriad of ways.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the women of Doreen, Victoria, and Eungella and Midge Point, North Queensland, who participated with commitment, thoughtfulness and humour in a trial program. We also wish to thank the City of Whittlesea and Mackay Regional Council for taking a leadership role and hosting the program.

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PROGRAM MANUAL

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This project has been an ambitious undertaking with limited resources. This manual aims to encourage and guide further deliveries of the program. It is designed as an online resource and we welcome any feedback as we continue to refine Weather the Storm based on input from women across Australia.

This manual presents a complete engagement program. It is not a series of independent activities, although it does present a range of possible ideas for discussing each topic. The manual provides a guide only. Some segments will take you longer to complete and some will take less time. Some activities will not suit your style, the group, the location or risks you are dealing with. The aim of this manual is to get you started.

This document is the first in a set of three documents:

1. Weather the Storm Program Manual
2. Weather the Storm Tools and Templates
3. Weather the Storm Resources

It is divided into four parts:

Section One provides you with important background information about Weather the Storm.

Section Two gives you a step-by-step guide to planning and delivering your program. This section is also essential reading to understand the philosophy and practical ways of delivery, before deciding whether to embark on delivering your own program.

Section Three contains the content of the program with a wealth of information to plan and prepare a comprehensive, interesting and fun program. These topics provide a clear framework and can be adapted to fit your own community.

Section Four of the manual is empty! That's because every community is different. This is where we want you to add your own information and resources that are relevant to the specific needs of your community.

Parts Two and Three of the Weather the Storm program are available on the National Rural Women's Network website www.nrwn.org.au

They include:

PART TWO - TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

This section includes specific information, worksheets and tools to assist you in designing your program. Some of these are for your reference and some can be photocopied and shared with participants. They include:

1. Sample Invitation Letter
2. Stories and Poems
3. Example Introduction to the Program
4. Group Agreements Guidelines
5. Risk Attitude Matrix Worksheet
6. Preparing for All Hazards Worksheet
7. Psychological Preparedness Session
8. Preparedness Vision Worksheet
9. Menu Planner Worksheet
10. Scenarios
11. Most Significant Change Worksheet
12. Participation Certificate
13. Post Program Survey

PART THREE - RESOURCES

In this document you will find resources which you may print off as handouts and provide to participants; examples of materials we developed relevant to the pilot groups and additional ideas for activities. It includes:

- Resource list
- Sample running sheet
- Supplementary Rediplan insert
- Steps to Preparing
- Example Information Sources
- Sample Weather Overview Information Sheet
- Sample Bureau of Meteorology Information Sheet
- Example Plan for Preparing
- Recovery Tip sheet
- Pandemic information
- Notes and Worksheet for plane crash scenario

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The number and severity of natural disasters is increasing...

Disasters come in many forms, yet they all remind us of the thin veil protecting us from the forces of nature. The past 10 years has seen a huge increase in the number and severity of natural disasters occurring in Australia and overseas.¹ We have also created our own vulnerabilities to prolonged loss of electricity, water, food and the effects of climate change.

Natural disasters often leave no room for shifting responsibility or modern solutions. They force on us to rely on ourselves in the most raw and fundamental way. They leave us at the mercy of nature in a world where we have been taught to rely not on ourselves, but on the government and emergency services.

Recent events, such as bushfires, cyclones and floods have shown us that there is an urgent need to educate communities about how to prepare for disasters and emergencies. It has pushed the issue to the forefront of matters affecting women and in particular women in rural areas, where natural disasters are more likely to occur.

WHY FOCUS ON WOMEN?

Women have specific needs and vulnerabilities during and after a disaster. They also provide a unique and vital contribution to preparation and recovery.

Despite comprising over 50% of the population, women's perspectives are often **missing from concepts of living with the risk** of disasters and decision-making about disaster management.

By becoming more engaged in disaster preparedness at a community level, women are more able to influence and inform the decisions and actions that Government agencies make about emergency management.

WE KNOW THAT WOMEN:

- Are often keen to participate in disaster preparedness but are sometimes discouraged or intimidated because of the male domination of emergency services. Women need specific opportunities to learn and participate.
- Are more vulnerable to disasters because they are more likely to be caring for children or the elderly and maybe isolated for long periods. Women are also more likely to have responsibility for the running of the house and the functioning of the family after a disaster.
- Often have an in depth knowledge of their local community, are great social networkers and are crucial in community preparations and recovery.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Traditionally, much of the focus of disaster management has been on emergency services managing the disaster. However we now know that there is much that needs to be done to prepare households and communities to manage the point of impact themselves and to be more resilient in recovery.

Rural communities are more susceptible to natural disasters and women within those communities play an enormous role in resilience and have specific needs not currently being addressed.

Preparing women, not just for the disaster event, but also for recovery can make a huge difference to the whole community.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE

The Weather the Storm program contributes to the Australia Government's National Strategy for Disaster Resilience by working with women preparing their households for disaster, and fostering social connections that will ultimately build disaster resilient communities.

It is in the potential to engage women and connect them with each other around the central issue of disaster preparedness, that this project responds to the Priority Outcomes of the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience—

3.3 Communicating with and educating people about risks and;

3.5 Empowering individuals and communities to exercise choice and take responsibility.”

The issue of community preparedness is also at the forefront of research, current policy debate, formulation and reform as well as processes such as Royal Commissions and Inquiries.

FACILITATED LEARNING...

Weather the Storm aims to engage women who are interested in the subject of preparedness. The program is designed to be a facilitated sharing and learning experience. Material is made available, subject topics and activities are prepared and discussions are framed, but the main input is from the conversations generated by the participants.

While people can read a brochure or attend a lecture on preparedness and response, this does not necessarily develop an ongoing awareness of risk or a mindset of preparedness. These things only come with considered thinking and discussion, with shared learning and deep understanding.

Preparing yourself to experience and survive the chaos and heartache of a disaster is an ongoing process. Developing a shared understanding of how your family will respond during a disaster or ways your community may react takes time and careful consideration.

Community development and well-facilitated processes allow women to come together and share their experiences; for each member of the group to be heard and valued to the extent they feel comfortable.

PROGRAM VALUES



While we encourage you to change and adapt the Weather the Storm program to fit the unique needs and context of your communities, the underlying integrity and strength of the program comes from the core values and beliefs outlined here.

1. GENDER SENSITIVITY

Women are often more comfortable, share more and participate more freely in a group when there are only women and they are able to connect through their shared gender experiences. This means women need tailored opportunities to learn and participate.

2. CONNECTEDNESS AND SAFETY

Building a safe, intimate environment is a core strength of the Weather the Storm program. When there is a sense of connection, safety and belonging we are able to share our lives and know each other at a deeper level. This builds community bonds, encourages participation and makes learning and change more effective.

3. RESPECT

Deeply held respect for each woman's experiences, life situation and trust that she can, with good information, support and encouragement make the best decisions for herself and her family in the context of her life.

4. CONVERSATION

Weather the Storm aims to tap into the fundamental experience of communication, where our thoughts become stronger when we express them and we learn more easily because of our universal human need to connect.

Like any behavioural change, the company, support and encouragement of others on the same path helps keep us focused and committed.

5. ONGOING

The women may wish to continue to meet, and support and encourage each other after the program. Therefore it is important to allow time at the end of the program for the group to discuss whether and how they might do this.

6. A PROGRAM FOR THE WILLING

The program's strength is in working with those with a keen interest in the area. We seek to attract women interested in preparing rather than impose the program on groups of women meeting for other reasons.

7. FLEXIBILITY

The program is targeted to women; it is flexible to the needs of the women who attend and allows them to take their own direction. In other words it is not a prescriptive course. It is intended to be fluid and adaptive.

8. COLLABORATION

The Weather the Storm program benefits from a multi-agency, cross-sector working group. Partners may lend their support by way of local knowledge, funding, resources, officers and branding.

9. ALL HAZARDS

The program can examine all-hazards and risks, both natural and human caused, personal and widespread, although there is often an emphasis on devastating natural disasters.

10. FACILITATION SKILLS

The program is not delivered by 'experts' in emergency preparedness, response or recovery, although some knowledge and understanding is useful. It is best delivered by people with some skills and/or interest in group dynamics and facilitation.

11. PROCESS

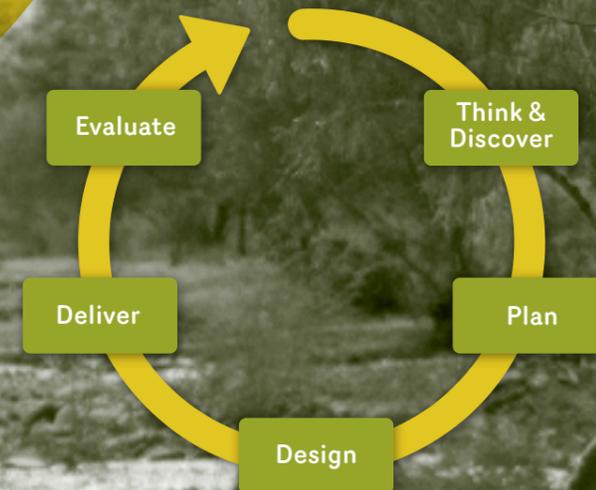
Connection and sharing is enhanced when we sit in a circle without tables or other furniture between us. This program benefits from repeated sessions. The time in between sessions is important for reflection and action, and the sense of belonging is deepened with every 'return' to the group.

12. DIVERSITY

Careful consideration should be given to how the program can be offered in ways that are inclusive and address social justice issues.

Weather the Storm aims to tap into the fundamental experience of communication, where our thoughts become stronger when we express them and we learn more easily because of our universal human need to connect.

Section Two: ORGANISING WEATHER THE STORM PROGRAM



Think & Discover, Plan, Design, Deliver and Evaluate. This section gives you a step-by-step guide to planning a program. This section is also essential reading in order to understand the philosophy and practical means of delivery, before deciding whether to embark on delivering your own program.

Step One: THINK AND DISCOVER



There is always a range of competing factors to be balanced in deciding how, when, where and who to deliver the program to. All communities are different with varying dynamics that inevitably influences participation. Thinking through and researching the dynamics of your community will help to clarify where to start.

GEOGRAPHICAL OR COMMUNITY OF INTEREST?

Weather the Storm was trialed in three small, rural communities where the women were living near each other. Naturally each group started with a sense of connection based on location. They faced shared risks and were more easily able to connect afterwards because travel was reduced.

However it would be possible to deliver the program to particular groups of women who may be from different communities such as women with a disability, women caring for someone with a disability, women from specific cultural or linguistic backgrounds,

women of a particular age and/or life cycle stage, women with particular education levels, women who are permanent or temporary residents and so on.

It is important to remember that the more geographically dispersed the participants are, the less likely they are to maintain contact after the program. However, this is not the only reason to run a program. There are significant benefits from what happens during the running of the program as well as any ongoing relationships afterwards.

VOLATILE ISSUES

If there is a history of mistrust or conflict between a community and local agencies, a current contentious or ongoing issue, or even a conflict within the community, there may be reluctance to run a personal program like Weather the Storm for fear the issue or conflict may get in the way.

However our experience was that the impact of these issues on the program was reduced due to a number of factors:

- The lead agency was unknown and had no history with the issues.
- The Circle of Influence/Circle of Concern session allows issues to be heard and women understood.
- The level of care, respect and empowering aims of the program assist to build a sense of community within the group.

It is of course not a magic formula and things can still go wrong! People are such tricky creatures.

Community mapping is a process that is used to get a better understanding of the complexity of a community. It involves working through and researching a series of questions about a community.



1. PEOPLE

- What are the community demographics?
- What are the social and economic characteristics?
- Is the population stable or transient?
- Who are the social connectors, leaders and influencers?

2. LOCATION

- What are the risks?
- How do the risks impact the community and women in particular?
- Where are the meeting places?
- What services are provided?
- Is there any geographic disadvantage?

3. GROUPS

- What are the prominent groups? Sports, craft, service, emergency?
- What are the women's groups?
- What are the needs of different groups?
- What unofficial social groups exist?

4. CHARACTER

- What is the community and its people known for?
- How does the community perceive itself?
- What beliefs and attitudes does the community share?

5. HISTORY AND CONCERNS

- Are there specific issues of concern in the community?
- Does the community have a sense of unity?
- What level of trust is there between your organisation, stakeholders and the target community?
- What is the disaster history of the area?
- Has there been a recent disaster? How recent and how serious?
- Is the community ready for this type of program?

6. PARTNERS

- Who are the key stakeholders?
- What organisations might you approach to partner in the delivery of the program? E.g. Local government, aid agencies, emergency agencies.
- What connections and links with the proposed community can you tap into?
- Who could provide funding and resources for the program?

Step Two: PLAN



Once you have a better idea of the factors that may impact the program and the community you wish to engage, you can start planning your program. Here are some questions to consider:

WHY?

- Does the impetus for this program come from a particular issue or event that has arisen? If so, how might this impact recruitment and delivery?

WHO

- Who are the women you are trying to engage?
- Do you want to target a specific group of women? E.g. Mothers, carers, isolated women?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Who do you need to convince?

WHAT

- What are the specific needs of the women you want to engage?
- Would it be worthwhile to run an information session to generate interest?

- Do you want to trial the program to develop some experience before doing a range of deliveries?

WHEN

- When? What day of the week? For how many hours? Over how many weeks? What season?

WHERE

- Is there a venue available within the target community, used by women and where they are comfortable?

RESOURCES

- What human, financial and physical resources do you need to dedicate to the delivery of this program?
- Do you have an experienced facilitator who accepts the underlying values of the program?
- Can you provide a support officer to assist with recruitment, build and maintain relationships, follow up contact and administration of the program?
- Will you provide a separate evaluator?
- Are you able to provide copies of a wide range of materials? Some materials will come from agencies but much of it printed from the Internet.
- Who will pay for the venue hire?
- Will you provide onsite childcare?
- What catering will you provide?

FOLLOW UP

- What follow-up support can be provided to the group?
- How will you evaluate the program?
- Will a report be produced? Who will write it? Who for?

GETTING WOMEN IN THE DOOR

Considerable effort is required to encourage women to attend the program.

The ideal number of registered participants to start with is around 15. People's ability to commit will vary and once you account for 'no shows', drop outs and days people cannot attend, a final attendance of 8 -12 participants is likely. As few as 5 women is workable and worthwhile, particularly if they can be supported to become community advocates or to promote another program later on. It is normal for the attendance rate to gradually drop off as the program progresses.

Here are some things that we found useful (and not so useful) in getting women to attend the pilot programs:

SOME THINGS WE FOUND USEFUL

- An invitation letter sent to women in the community was useful in recruiting participants. It can also be sent just before the program to remind and encourage those who have registered to keep their commitment. A sample invitation letter is provided in Part Two – Tools and Templates.
- Using existing networks, including those of our key stakeholders. This allowed us to reach more women. Using joint branding on promotional materials also gave the program more credibility.
- We connected with key women in the community, who helped by encouraging others to attend. We also connected with existing community groups and asked them to invite their members and contacts.

- While printed materials are useful, nothing beats face-to-face contact!
- While it may be disruptive, allowing women to join after it has started is worthwhile. Check with participants at the first session to ensure they agree.

SOME THINGS WE FOUND NOT SO USEFUL

- Last minute and rushed marketing.
- Targeting communities still recovering from a devastating disaster.
- If many participants share a common bond or connection, it may affect the culture in the group because there is an existing network. It may also lead to others feeling excluded.
- Other forms of traditional print media support the face-to-face and targeted recruitment, but have a reduced primary impact.

Step Three: DESIGN



Each program will vary in timing and duration. Therefore each program will need to be designed specifically for your community.

Step Three (Design) and Step Four (Delivery) are closely related. There are some core aspects of delivery that we believe create the framework for the design and are at the heart of the program, which are discussed in the next section.

TIMING

There are several aspects to time:

- Total number of hours: the pilot programs were roughly 15 'in session' hours.
- Total number of sessions: we suggest a minimum of three to maximise the period for reflections in between and deepen the connection each time the group returns. In the trials we ran one program over five half days and the other two programs over three longer days.
- Length of each 'in session' time block: Ideally a time bracket with a break either side is 90 minutes. An hour is fine, and with a stretch or energiser in the middle, two hours can work.

PROGRAM PLAN

It is helpful to have a detailed running sheet of the program you will deliver. A running sheet is a simple document that sets out exactly what you will do, what resources you need, the timing for each section and who is responsible for each component. We have provided a sample running sheet we used in the first session of the program in Part Three – Resources.

It is important to make sure you have identified the resources you require for the delivery and estimated the time each section will take. Remember, the bigger the group, the longer everything takes.

The golden rule is over prepare, then go with the flow. In other words have a full program but do not become fixated on getting through it all - you are unlikely to stick to the plan or the time allocations. It is more important to be present to the women. As long as it is useful, meaningful or fun, go with what is happening.

An example of how we structured one of the pilot programs (5 hours a day for 3 days) is set out here:

DAY ONE

9.15am – 11.00am	Introduction to the program and facilitator(s) Participant Introductions Hopes and Expectations Groups Agreement
11.15am – 1.00pm	Circle of Concern Discussion Personal Stories Risk Assessment
1.30pm – 3.00pm	Options and Possibilities Steps to Preparing Evacuation and Stay at Home Kits Reflections on the day

DAY TWO

9.15am – 11.00am	Sharing Information Sources Weather Mapping Widespread Breakdown of Society
11.15am – 1.00pm	Psychological Preparedness
1.30pm – 3.00pm	Preparedness Discussion Questions Preparedness Vision Developing a Plan to Get Prepared Reflections on the day

DAY THREE

9.15am – 11.00am	Sharing Relationships: partners, kids, neighbours, animals Food
11.15am – 1.00pm	Recovery Scenarios
1.30pm – 3.00pm	Where to from here? Evaluation Final Reflection

Step Four: DELIVERY



The next step is to deliver your program of Weather the Storm. This section contains some of the essential aspects of the program. It also contains some practical steps which ensure smooth running of the program.

FACILITATION

Good facilitation is one of the biggest factors for the program's success and it is a developed skill.

- There are many dynamics to balance during the facilitation process and as a facilitator you should aim to recognise these and move back and forth between them. Some of the key dynamics include:
 - group/individual,
 - process leadership process consultation,
 - group maintenance - the task or activity,
 - outcomes – process,
 - time – participation,
 - group's aims/needs – program aims.
- Most facilitation models allow for considerable time to establish connections within the group, discuss hopes and expectations and develop some group agreements or ways of working together. This can often be frustrating for the participants who just like to 'get on with it' and is sometimes not well understood as being the bedrock of enabling flow and connection later.
- Because of the focus on personal stories and sharing in the Weather the Storm program, there is an even greater need to pay attention to the foundational activities that allow the bonding to happen. The suggestions here are just that, suggestions. There are many ways of acknowledging 'coming into the circle' and it is important that whatever you do feels right for you and comes from the heart.
- It can be useful to recognise that some participants may be nervous about what is going to happen. Laughing at yourself, admitting it might be a bit daggy and reassuring participants that they don't have to do anything they don't want to do, can help ease this anxiety.
- Group dynamics are complex and facilitation can be tricky. There will undoubtedly be challenging moments.

A FEW FACILITATION TIPS

- Be yourself, be transparent, open and honest.
- Remain centred and calm. This is the most significant, and possibly hardest, aspect and needs to be practiced beforehand (e.g. through meditation and breathing exercises).
- Pay attention and listen with heart and compassion.
- Don't try to control the process too tightly.
- Don't be scared of silence. Allow time after any request for participation.
- Catch moments of courage and intimacy and thank participants.
- Reassure participants that sharing is voluntary - never pressure anyone.
- Trust the group to be able to assist if you do not know what to do. Don't think you need to be 'the authority'. Acknowledge your mistakes, and be open to their input.
- Laugh – especially at yourself – and have fun.
- Be kind on yourself. Write a log of your facilitation and/or debrief as soon as possible after the session. Focus on what you did well and also try to imagine how you might have done something differently or better.

It is important to accept whatever the women bring forth in their attempt to make sense of the risks and their choices. Women need to be allowed to share how they think about, manage and deal with a whole range of fears, pain and trauma, in order to make sense of the risks, their past and possible future.

It is important to respect and have faith in the women to make their own decisions. They will know best how they live, the risks they perceive, and the circumstances of their lives and homes. It can help to invite the women to respect each other as well.

Any attempt to lecture, persuade, convert or preach certain actions, behaviour or standards, or way of thinking, attitude or approach will be detrimental to the program.

Our tendency is to want to impart information describing what to do, think or feel - especially if we have done some thinking around emergency preparedness. It takes a lot of discipline to frame a conversation, prompt discussion, state some givens if needed, while remaining open to allowing people to make sense of the information in their own way.

READ AND LEARN MORE ABOUT FACILITATION

To learn about and develop your facilitation skills, you can access training, books or free internet resources. However, not all methods of facilitation suit a program like Weather the Storm. Facilitation is a practiced skill and there is no substitute for experience, reflection and improvement.

Step Five: **EVALUATION**



Evaluation is one of the most important aspects of delivering the program. It helps you understand what went well, what didn't and gives you the information you need to improve and demonstrate the effectiveness of the program

When conducting the pilot program, we chose two methods of evaluation:

1. MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TECHNIQUE

The Most Significant Change technique was used in the final session of the program. We asked women to form small groups and discuss the following question:

"Share a story or a moment that best describes the most significant change that has resulted from your involvement in this program"

We then asked the women to record their answers individually. A Most Significant Change Worksheet is included in Part Two – Tools and Templates.

More information about the Most Significant Change Technique is available at www.kstoolkit.org/Most+Significant+Change

2. POST PROGRAM EVALUATION SURVEY

We asked participants to complete an evaluation survey about their experiences of the program after the program had finished. We used Survey Monkey (a free online survey service) and posted a printed copy with a stamped self-addressed envelope to women not on email. An example survey is included in Part Two – Tools and Templates.

When considering the results of your evaluation, ask yourself the following questions:

- What were there strengths of the program?
- What do we need to improve in the future?
- To what extent did the program achieve its goals?
- How can we ensure that the program is sustainable in the future?
- Who would benefit from hearing about the outcome of the program?

It is always a good idea to write up a brief report about the program that can be shared with program stakeholders.

Section Three: **WEATHER THE STORM PROGRAM**

This section contains the content of the program with a wealth of information to plan and prepare a comprehensive, interesting and fun program. These topics provide a clear framework and can be adapted to fit your own delivery.

1. INTRODUCTORY SESSION AND ONGOING PROCESSES

The first session sets the tone for the whole program and is important in helping women feel comfortable and build connections. This allows for a depth of sharing throughout the rest of the program.

There are also processes repeated which build the group culture and underpin the whole program. Here are some of the things we found useful to do before, during and after the sessions.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST SESSION

Setting up:

- Set up chairs in a circle without tables. Provide enough chairs for the number of participants expected. Remove any excess chairs once everyone has arrived – it is better to bring in chairs for late arrivals than to have empty chairs.
- Place any resources you are handing out under the chairs (e.g. blank notebook and pen, markers and paper plate for agreements, etc).
- Place a centre piece on the floor, with a candle, matches and items related to disaster preparedness (e.g. torch, first aid kit, books).
- Have the agenda on butchers paper on the wall.
- Set out any materials for women to take on a table at the back.
- Check that catering, childcare, tea and coffee are organised.

- Have a box of tissues handy.
- Set out pens and materials, markers and whiteboard for quick access.
- Set out fun materials for name badge making.

As women arrive:

- Be warm and welcoming. Some women may be quite nervous.
- Register your participants and collect essential information like full names, phone numbers and email addresses so you can keep in contact during and after the program.
- Invite participants to make a name badge. This can be a good focus activity when everyone is a bit anxious.

The beginning of the first session

- Light the candle and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land and waters, and elders, past and present.
- Take a moment to acknowledge the beginning - e.g. "Lets take a deep breath, you've made it".
- Welcome the women, thank them and acknowledge them for giving up their time and being committed and courageous enough to face the issue of preparing for disasters.
- Provide practical information such as the location of the bathrooms, fire exits, time of breaks and catering information.
- Introduce the program and yourself (see the Example Introduction to the Program Part Two – Tools and Templates.) and any support people in the room.
- Do group introductions.
 1. Invite women to have mini conversations with several women in the room (see example running sheet in Part Three –

Resources). This allows them to connect with other participants before being invited to address the whole group.

2. Before they sit down, invite women to choose from a selection of about 25 beanie kids (small stuffed bears with different characters), nature objects or photos. There is never any obligation to choose an item but most women do. This is a way to draw participants into the group and share unique things about themselves.
 3. As a group, go round the circle inviting women to answer the following questions:
 - Who are you and where do you come from?
 - What motivated you to come?
 - Why did you choose that particular item?
 - Develop some group agreements (see the example Group Agreements Guidelines in Part Two – Tools and Templates).
 - Identify participants' hopes and expectations for the program – write them up on butchers paper. Questions to ask include:
 - What are your hopes and expectations for this program?
 - What do you specifically want to learn in this program?
 - Imagine at the end of this training you are talking to a friend or relative or your partner and you say "Weather the Storm was great, I really enjoyed it and learnt a lot". What would need to happen for you to say that?
- Go through the list generated and if there are any topics they wish to cover that will not be covered in the program advise and explain why.
- Refer to the blank notebook and a pen under each participant's seat. Suggest they use it to note down any ideas or thoughts, in particular

keeping a running 'to do' list. The idea is to have a book women can refer back to so they know what they wanted to achieve and some ideas for doing it. It can also act as a reminder.

AT THE BEGINNING OF SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS

- Welcome women back and thank them for their commitment and contribution.
- Pass a talking piece around (see guidelines in Group Agreements Activity in Part Two – Tools and Templates) and invite each woman to share how she is, what is happening in her world, any reflections from last time, any preparations she has done or conversations she has had since last time.

IN BETWEEN SESSIONS

- Follow up any general issues – questions, requests etc.
- If women don't return, a follow up phone call may be appropriate. This may also be useful if any issues arise which are complex and personal. While it may not change things, an apology for any mistakes made or simply the inability of the program to assist can go a long way to healing hurt feelings.

DURING THE PROGRAM

- We usually begin each conversation by framing it with a relevant explanation, story or poem.
- Be flexible with breaks and notice when attention or energy is waning. There is no point continuing when people are hungry or tired.
- Sitting and talking all day can be quite tiring so prepare some quick, fun, energiser activities.
- Towards the end of the second last session it is important to ask:

"Is there something you want to make sure we cover in the final session?"

AT THE END OF EACH SESSION

- We asked women to share what they learned from the session - what part of the session did they find the most useful? Sometimes we asked if they wanted to make a commitment to doing something for their preparations.
- We asked participants to give feedback about what they liked or what they would like changed in the session, so we could adapt accordingly. One way is to draw a

vertical line on the whiteboard or butchers paper, with a smiley face on one side and sad face on the other and ask for points for either side.

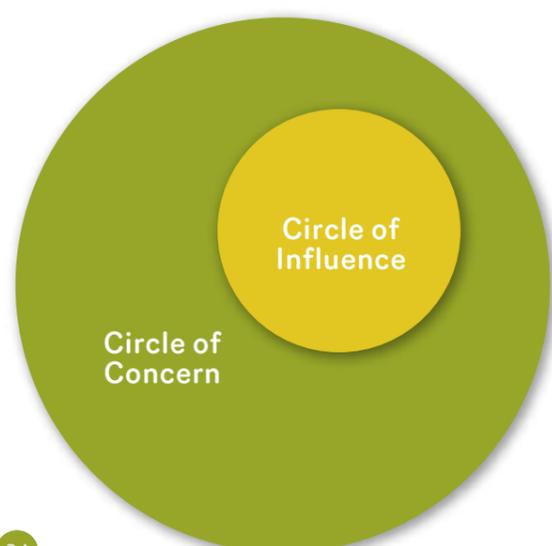
- Circle round with a talking piece and ask each woman if she would like to make any final comments or reflections on the session.
- Do a closing to acknowledge the end of the session and blow the candle out. It can be as little as all standing up.

2. CIRCLE OF CONCERN – CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

The aim in this session is to facilitate a discussion about the issues which are really bugging people.

Regardless of whether the issues are related to disasters, the goal is to ensure people are heard and concentrate their focus on the issues that are within their circle of influence.

The concept of circle of concern and circle of influence come from Stephen Covey's book 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People'. The concept is illustrated by the following visual, which is good to draw for participants.



CIRCLE OF CONCERN:

Those things that we are concerned about but over which we have no direct influence (unless we decide to make it a goal to take action, and this can be encouraged if there is the interest) are within our Circle of Concern. For example, what the Government did in response to a disaster, or how the emergency service agency did not listen or help last time, or the preparedness advertisements on TV, or lack of Council services in the town etc.

CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

Those things which we can directly influence (such as our own level of preparedness, our attitudes and actions, relationships and reactions) are within our Circle of Influence.

FRAME

"We all have loads of worries and concerns, things that we see on the news that distress us, things that happen or do not happen in our community or things in our world that make us angry and frustrated.

We can all sympathise with the frustration of dealing with a large bureaucracy to resolve a personal issue, like how your power bill is calculated or your building permit works.

While most of these things are outside our control, they can take up a lot of our thinking and can be emotionally exhausting. They can also colour our decision-making.

In order to lay them aside, at least for the time we work together, it is useful to hear them. So I would like to circle round with the talking piece and ask you if you would like to share your reflections to the question:

Do you find anything frustrating, hurtful or infuriating about preparing, responding or recovering from emergency or disasters?"

You could write the issues up on the board or on butcher's paper. Our experience has been that it is better to simply listen because the use of the board focuses everyone on the board and not on what people are saying and the emotion behind it.

If an authorising body such as local government is present, it may be good for them to take notes, and offer to pass this information back through appropriate channels or offer an explanation.

The aim is not to excuse or negate anything that has happened. The purpose is to hear and acknowledge how it is for participants.

3. PERSONAL STORIES

There are many moments throughout the program where personal stories will arise.

It is a good sign that people are relating the topic to their lives and experiences when they are reminded of something that happened to them.

Stories are naturally more interesting, providing examples of how a person has experienced an event, both in a physical way and also their emotions and mental response. They are powerful, more easily remembered and they connect us to each other.

It seems helpful at the start of the program to allow time for women to share a story. Ask them to think about a time they managed a crisis, whether it relates to their disaster experiences or not.

It may be helpful for the facilitator or someone else assisting in the program to share a story from their life. It is also important to invite sharing, but do not expect it and make sure everyone has had a turn who wants to (e.g. pass a talking piece around the circle twice, or repeatedly inviting women to share until there is no one else who wants to).

This is how we framed and asked the question in our trial program. However, you may develop a more appropriate way of inviting participation from your group, using the following prompts:

FRAME:

"Think about a time when you were scared/in danger/in a disaster situation. I am going to ask you to share afterwards so try to make it one you are willing to share. It might be when facing childbirth, a car accident, a time you faced your own mortality or the mere threat of something."

You may allow quiet time for the women to write it down, or tell your own story and then circle round or invite anyone who is ready.

Once a woman has finished her story, if it feels appropriate ask some more questions to elicit what this might tell the woman about how she reacts to danger, fear or stress.

Be careful not to pry. Try to interpret, offer solutions or ask the teller to interpret or solve. It may help to gently ask the other women to do the same. It is good to acknowledge how difficult it may have been and any strengths the woman demonstrated.

4. RISKS

The aim of this session is to identify the full range of risks, dangers or hazards that women contemplate and to rank the risks in terms of their perception of likelihood and severity.

FRAME

“Our perceptions of likelihood and our assessment of the consequences of risks determines our attitude to them. Attitudes to risk are very personal, and there is no right or wrong attitude.”

Examples of disasters which are very uncertain in both chance and severity, are bushfire and cyclones. [It is useful to use examples relevant to the community you are working with.] Often we doubt the likelihood of a fire or cyclone happening even though we know that the consequences may be devastating. Maybe we are filled with fear and see images of the consequences, but we think the likelihood of it happening on any given day is remote.

There are all sorts of other judgments we make when gathering information and processing it through a lifetime of ideas, beliefs and emotions.”

Activity: Card Storming

Ask participants the following:

“Individually write a list of all the possible disasters/hazards that you might be exposed to. What keeps you awake at night?”

[It is important here to clarify that you are asking participants to name the risks of the disaster or hazard occurring, not the

consequences of the disaster or hazard when it happens. Some things can fit in both categories (e.g. loss of power), in which case they should be listed, but damage to a house, or personal injury are generally the consequence of something else.]

Ask participants to pair up, share and discuss their lists.

After a few minutes give each pair sheets of paper and large markers and ask:

“Each choose your top three or four risks and write one per sheet of paper in large letters.”

Participants don't need to agree - it is a set of risks for each person. The purpose of the pairing is to allow them to articulate what they have written and maybe change their list. Gather up the sheets.

Read each sheet out, and stick them on the wall or on the floor within the circle, loosely sorting them by hazard as you go (e.g. all the cyclone sheets together). The group will help you sort the sheets out. Try to avoid getting bogged down in detail about what goes in which pile.

After they are all out and sorted, Ask:

“What's missing?”

Write up suggestions and add them to the piles.

Note: There is likely to be someone, and there may even be a few women, who think about aliens. In this instance, it is good to name and validate their concern by saying it is not an uncommon fear and it makes sense.

Once the sheets are sorted into groups, name each pile and list them on the whiteboard or butchers paper. You should now have a full list of all the possible risks and fears that rattle around in participants' heads.

Activity: Risk Assessment Matrix

Handout the 'risk assessment matrix table' provided in Part Two – Tools and Templates.

This worksheet asks you to list the top 6 - 10 risks you worry about in any order. No

ranking is required at this stage. You can list more or less if you want to.

Work down the list allocating a number for each risk based on your beliefs about:

- *The chance of it happening; and*
- *The seriousness of the consequences*

Add up these scores to give each risk a number. Once you have done the whole list, you give the risk with the highest score a No. 1 ranking, the second highest No.2 and so on.

Allow quiet time for women to work through the sheet, assisting any women who get stuck.

Circle around, asking women to share their top three or four risks. It is usually quite

surprising how varied the lists are and helpful in terms of focussing attention on specific risks.

Afterwards you may like to invite reflections on what women have shared. One way is through a focussed conversation method asking the following questions in order:

Objective: “What things stand out for you when you hear everyone's results from their matrix? What are the key words?”

Reflective: “What surprises you? What intrigues you? Are you reminded of anything?”

Interpretive: “What does this mean for you and your risk assessment matrix?”

Decisional: “Are there any changes you would like to make to your list, now you've heard from everyone else?”

5. OPTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

For any hazard there will be a range of possibilities and a range of ways of responding.

Depending on the women and the risks they face, it can be useful to focus the discussion on one or two major risks and work through the following questions.

- *How long will the impact remain? Minimum and maximum length of time likely? Hours, days weeks or months?*
- *Do we/can we evacuate before? E.g. You can usually evacuate for a cyclone and bushfire, but you may not be able to evacuate for an earthquake.*
- *Will we shelter at home? E.g. You may find shelter at home for a cyclone, but not for a bushfire.*
- *Will we/can we stay and defend? E.g. For a Bushfire?*
- *Is your home at risk of damage or destruction? For most natural disasters your home will be at risk, but it may not be at risk during a pandemic.*

- *Will judgment and decision-making required at the time of the emergency? For most disasters it will be, but arguably not for an earthquake (although afterwards, there may be).*
- *What impact could this disaster have on the community and how might this affect individuals?*

EVACUATION

Evacuation decisions are critical to matters of safety and danger, yet deceptively complex. It is very important to allow participants time to really think through and discuss all aspects of evacuation.

FRAME

“Governments almost universally offer evacuation advice. However, it is often extremely cautious and as a result may be difficult to apply to our complex and busy lives with many factors to consider (e.g. animals, children, commitments, etc).”

Generally the more informed, aware and educated we are about the nature of the risks we may face, the better we are able to exercise wise judgment in deciding when to evacuate.

Ultimately, disasters and hazards are risky – that is what we are living with. We are not eliminating the risk but we are learning to understand it, apply information to our personal circumstances, and make better decisions as a result.

Describing scenarios is also a great way to draw out the complexity of decision making in evacuating.”

Activity:

An activity which may be helpful, either in the session or as ‘homework’ is the ‘Preparing for All Hazards Worksheet’ provided in Part Two – Tools and Templates. The aim of this worksheet is to tease out some of the considerations for each of the identified risks, with a view to showing where to focus attention and action.

REDIPLAN

Red Cross have produced a range of booklets which sets out four steps for preparing for disaster:

1. Be informed
2. Make a plan
3. Get an emergency kit
4. Know your neighbours

This booklet can be obtained from Red Cross in hardcopy or downloaded. There are several versions which are listed here: www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx

It is useful to hand out copies of the Rediplan booklets to participants. At the end of the booklet is a ‘Household Emergency Plan’, which can be filled in by participants. It contains limited information and is probably more accurately described as a vital information and family reuniting plan. It is nationally recognised and available.

Our experience was that participants found the Rediplan particularly useful to think about who in their family, away from where they live, can be a contact point for other members of the family. The idea is that one person is nominated to receive and disseminate information to other family members. The Rediplan also asks people to nominate places to meet, should members of the family become separated.

We have developed a supplement which includes a few other contact details we thought might be useful. You may like to provide as the supplement an insert to the Rediplan. It is provided in Part Three - Resources.

RELEVANT AGENCIES

More detailed information on specific hazards can be obtained directly from different emergency agencies. It may be helpful to develop a document listing which agencies are responsible for which hazards in your area. An example is shown here.

RISK	AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
Flood, storm, tsunami, earthquake	State Emergency Service (SES)
Bushfire, house fire, burnoffs	Fire Services (CFA, RFS, CFS, etc)
Health, pandemics	Ambulance, Department of Health
Road, crime	Police

6. STEPS TO PREPARING

This sheet can be provided as a handout to women. It steps out the process of planning and preparing for any hazards.

It could also be used for a group activity. It is provided in Part Three – Resources

7. EVACUATION AND STAY AT HOME KITS

There are many lists available which set out what you should consider packing for an evacuation kit. A kit for sheltering at home or a kit for managing after a disaster has unfolded (i.e. a ‘stay at home’ kit).

However there is great power in a group creating their own list, relevant to them and the disasters they face. This provides the group members with ownership of the list and increases motivation to make the kit because they have had input into the contents. It can be done as a whole group activity, or in small groups feeding back and only adding if something hasn’t already been listed.

As there is considerable cross over in the evacuation and the stay at home kits, it maybe good to focus on one or the other. Perhaps ask the group which one is more relevant to them, or ask them to work in two groups.

For an evacuation kit there are a lot of questions about what sort of evacuation kit you want to develop - from being able to survive in the bush with only what you have (you will need cooking equipment, tents, sleeping gear etc.), to being at an evacuation centre or going to stay with relatives.

It is important to pose these questions as choices and to ask which level the group wants to focus on in the activity.

You could also discuss an “important papers kit” (e.g. birth certificates, photos and other important documents in a fire/waterproof container).

Water:

How much water will you need? There are a few different amounts recommended depending on if you are calculating drinking, cooking, washing dishes, bodies and clothes and any other activities for which we often take water for granted.

- In general terms the United Nations estimates we need between 20 – 50 litres of water per person per day for drinking, cooking and washing.
- In Australia the National Water Commission estimates we use on average 220 litres per person per day

- In a temporary emergency situations you could get by with 4–5 litres per person per day.

It can be useful to have water purification kit or tablets in an emergency kit.

Once you have determined which type of kit you are developing, the activity is a simple brainstorming activity. This can be done as a large group, or in smaller groups that report back to the main group at the end.

It can also be a useful activity to ask the group to break the list down into essential items, items that are good to have and those which are not as necessary (e.g. baby items).

Resources: All state and territory governments will have some kit lists on their websites, often included in general information about emergency preparedness. These publications could be made available to participants. Red Cross include a list in the Rediplan.

Kits online:

What follows is a list of Australian websites where kits can be purchased online. They are not recommended or vetted in anyway, but they may be helpful to give to participants.

www.kitbag.com.au

www.survivalsuppliesaustralia.com.au

www.ozsurvivalkit.com/index.html

www.survivalstorehouse.com

8. INFORMATION SOURCES AND WEATHER

Resources for disaster information and local weather will need to be collected for each group, relevant to the region and the specific risks faced.

It may also be useful to provide an overview of the local climate to participants, in particular information relevant to weather risks. While many participants will know this information, others may not and it helps to have it explained as an overview. However, it can be difficult to source information that is useful and accessible. An example we developed, again for the Mackay region, is provided in Part Three - Resources.

It may also be beneficial to source or create a handout that describes the various warning levels for the risks which have been identified for the area.

FRAME

Generally speaking there are three types of information sources – weather reports, our senses, and news or other people.

Cricket story – see Stories and Poems in Part Two – Tools and Templates.

What information do we need to monitor?

What is useful to be aware of in a certain type of disaster? (e.g. cyclone weather?)

A prominent example of this is the 2004 Thailand tsunami where lack of knowledge of the hazard signs was a significant factor contributing loss of life.

How do you receive information to stay aware?

How do you seek more information?

How do you pass on information?

Go through the information you have collected.

Are there any other information sources available? Local newsletters, social media, local internet sites, notice boards?

WEATHER AND WARNINGS

What do you know about the weather patterns in your area?

What are the high-risk weather seasons?

What weather warnings are given?

Are people aware of where/how to access weather warnings?

What other warnings are given and what do they mean?

Are there any other signs you know or have heard of that give an indication of bad weather (big cyclones changing the colour of the sky, animals behaving in certain ways etc.)?

Activity

If it seems appropriate for your group a simple game of Chinese whispers can highlight the dangers of misinformation and how easily it can occur. It can happen through trusted outlets such as radio and newspapers as well as within communities.

Example whisper:

There's a really big cyclone coming, they say it will hit Mackay but I reckon it looks the same as Ada and will make landfall at Proserpine.

9. MAPPING

A map of an area can usually be found online (e.g. at your state or territory government website or Google Maps), at whatever size and level of detail is considered useful.

It can be useful to provide a few different maps, including:

- A map showing a radius of 50km to show the surrounding terrain and topographical features.
- A detailed map of the local area, on which roads, community infrastructure and other local features can be mapped.

It is ideal if coloured maps are provided to participants.

If it is difficult to source an appropriate map or you may not be able to access coloured maps, you can ask individuals or small groups to draw a map on butcher's paper with coloured markers, showing the features listed below.

GROUP MAPPING ACTIVITY

Use the coloured markers to create a map of the local area or mark an existing map, including the following features:

- Shops/businesses
- Roads
- Each participant's home
- Other significant buildings
- Possible evacuation routes
- Significant natural features
- Any other landmarks
- North
- Usual wind directions
- The direction a cyclone/bushfire/flood/storm is likely to come from
- Storm surge area (if applicable)
- Flood area (if applicable) and
- Any other risks or relevant features.

10. WIDESPREAD BREAKDOWN OF SOCIETY

The broad aim of this discussion is to ask women to contemplate the possible breakdown of society, or a relatively sudden and dramatic change in our way of life.

FRAME

We are going to ask you to think about the possibility of a complete breakdown of society. This can be frightening, but we believe that it is important to consider this scenario. Do not dwell on it - the aim is to move beyond fear.

This will allow each participant to begin to clarify in her own mind how far or how much she wants to prepare, by writing a plan to achieve that level of preparedness.

As a whole group, in pairs or in small groups, brainstorm the possible causes of sudden and dramatic changes in our way of life.

Possible causes include:

- Prolonged and widespread loss of electricity
- Financial collapse
- Social unrest
- Widespread fatal pandemic
- Famine
- War/invasion

Discussion questions:

What is the most likely cause?

How likely do you think it is?

Do you think this is something you would want to prepare for?

Circle Round

11. PSYCHOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS

This is a large section. In Part Two – Tools and Templates there is a comprehensive set of instructions including worksheets, activities and framing of issues for this section of the program.

There are many ways of approaching this topic, and the ideas provided in Part Two – Tools and Templates are merely suggestions.

It is good to acknowledge that this is one of the areas of the program containing a lot of information.

Two other things to bear in mind are:

1. A great way to highlight the strengths of the participants is to notice and comment on the strength women demonstrate when they share stories about their lives.

2. Allowing and encouraging story sharing may be more useful than many other activities and exercises set out in the session outline.

The overall structure of the session is as follows:

- a. Introductory story: Good luck, bad luck
- b. Physical reaction to stress and fear
- c. Why we look at mental preparation
- d. Awareness of thought processes
- e. Negative thinking
- f. Sharing

- g. Characteristics of resilience
- h. Locus of control and improving your internal locus of control
- i. Personal stories
- j. Skills to anticipate, identify and manage
- k. Calming techniques
- l. Strength activity

Two things to highlight are:

1. The skills and ideas you will learn are useful as we go about our daily life and
2. We need to practice these skills regularly in the good times, in order to have them as habits when we are in crisis.

12. PREPAREDNESS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The aim of this section is for women to have small group conversations about the following questions:

What are the possible long-term physical, emotional, mental impacts of an emergency or disaster? How can you prepare for these long-term impacts?

What are the benefits of preparing for disasters and emergencies? (e.g. physical, emotional, mental)?

What are the biggest barriers to preparedness? What are some strategies to overcome these barriers?

We suggest a carousel process for this activity. You can add more questions if you have more than fifteen participants.

CAROUSEL ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

In this activity the group will be split into smaller groups of about 3-5. There are a number of 'stations' set up around the room with butchers paper stuck on the wall, floor or table. Each station has one question written at the top of the butchers paper and some large coloured markers. Each group starts at one station and spends some time (5 to 10 minutes) at that station discussing and writing answers to the question. It is a brainstorming exercise – all ideas are put on the sheet.

- After the allocated time, each group moves around to the next station, where they read the previous group's response to and add other ideas. After a certain time the groups move again, until eventually they come back to the station they started at.
- At this point you can ask each group to report back or you can read the sheets out yourself (this option maybe quicker - you can ask for an explanation if needed)

13. DEVELOPING A PREPARATION PLAN

The aim of this activity is for each woman to develop an idea of how much preparation she wants to do, by looking at:

- what she currently does to prepare
- what is missing from her current level of preparedness and
- how prepared she would be if there were no barriers at all.

FRAME

"Our lives and personal circumstances are very different. We rank the risks we face differently, our homes and locations are different and we start from different levels of preparedness.

So it stands to reason that we will have different goals for our preparedness, different ways of becoming prepared and different things we need to do to be prepared.

Experiences, beliefs and character traits develop what might be called our "vision".

It can be a difficult and very personal decision to determine "how much do I prepare?"

There is no set answer.

There are government recommendations (e.g. ensure you have food and water for 7 days), but they're estimations for disasters that will not overwhelm the whole of society. They are based on government concerns that don't always match individual and community needs. They are often designed to be manageable and to send a message that help will be just around the corner. Often help will be available but it is important to be prepared in the event it is not in order to build

resilience and learn to make decisions yourself. This program is designed to support participants to make these types of decisions for themselves.

If you understand what you are aiming to achieve, you will then be able to write a plan. Even if you don't complete the plan as you intend now, you will have a document you can come back to whenever you become focussed or can allocate time to preparedness.

So to start with I'd like to invite you to do a Preparedness Vision Worksheet."

Hand out worksheets (see Part Two – Tools and Templates) and pens and give women 10 – 15 minutes of quiet time to do this work.

(This document could be further developed with a series of questions that might help guide the thinking process.)

DEVELOPING A PLAN

What participants have written in the Vision exercise can form the basis of a plan for being prepared. Being prepared is an ongoing process and may take years. Asking participants to capture all the things they want to achieve and stepping them out into a prioritised list (i.e. a plan) can be very helpful.

Preparing rarely happens all in one go. However, preparing a comprehensive plan now means participants will have a guiding document to come back to whenever attention is focused on preparing.

You may want to give the Example Plan (see Part Three – Resources) to participants to provide an example of how to write a preparation plan for themselves. It is designed for an area where bushfires are the main risk. You may want to adapt it or further develop it to be useful to you and the women in your group.

14. RELATIONSHIPS: PARTNERS, KIDS, NEIGHBOURS & ANIMALS

The aim of this section is to invite women to have small group conversations to think and talk about issues relating to how we prepare in the context of our relationships.

We again used a carousel process (see instructions in Section 12). Stations should be headed as follows:

Partner/family: challenges, risks and solutions

Children: challenges, risks and solutions

Animals: challenges, risks and solutions

Neighbours: challenges, risks and solutions

These are complex issues and below are detailed suggestions of how to introduce the activity and get people thinking.

FRAME

"We are going to have small group discussions about relationships – partners, children, neighbours and animals. Not everyone has all these things in their life, so concentrate on those that are relevant to you."

PARTNERS

There are many situations where life is much more complex because of our partner relationships – for example holidays, raising children and money. Preparing, facing and recovering from a crisis is no exception and can be seriously challenging or even fatal because of our relationships.

We know that discussion through points of disagreement needs to occur before hand, even if two people are going to do different things in the event of a disaster.

Typically the topic comes up as "what will we do when/if" or "we need to get prepared for". Very quickly there is a stumbling block that arises in reaching agreement - one partner may be more committed to preparation than the other, or one partner wants to stay and the other wants to leave. The discussion soon stops, there is no plan and no action.

Relationships can founder in the wake of a disaster and there is a documented increase in relationship breakdown and family violence following disasters.

CHILDREN

There seems to be clear evidence that involving children in the conversations and the preparation for disaster helps them feel empowered, better able to cope and reduces their fear – just like us.

Children may also go through a period of fear as they live with the risk, but it holds them in better stead facing a disaster than if they had no idea it was a possibility.

The international Aid Agency Plan states the following in their 'Child Centred Disaster Risk Reduction' publication:

"Young citizens have the right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives and thus they have the right to participate in the governance of 'Disaster Risk Reduction Services'. Their participation results in better decisions, higher quality services, greater access to those services, and better development outcomes as a result of those services."

These are high aims, but they illustrate the philosophy of involvement and empowerment. Talking to children, showing them how to work through their fears and involving them are all important tasks.

It is difficult to find the right balance because we want to protect children and we want to reassure them that everything will be OK, but we also need to prepare them. The aim is to keep their thoughts from becoming exaggerated.

NEIGHBOURS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- *During natural disasters there an affinity often develops with those who live nearby because we experience the impact of the disaster together and may be isolated together.*
- *You may feel responsible for your neighbours if they are elderly, have a disability or young children.*
- *Humans are herd animals and it is often greatly comforting to have the company of others in facing a dangerous situation.*
- *We can pool skills, strengths and resources.*

15. FOOD

Being prepared with food (and water) for a period of time takes some thinking through, planning and purchasing. Sharing ideas and recipes is helpful and can be fun.

Some neighbors develop a response plan together and shelter in the strongest house or collaborate to defend all the properties in the street. Even just knowing if your neighbours leaving or staying can be helpful.

ANIMALS

Animals can make us very vulnerable during an emergency because we don't know what to do with them, how to manage them or where to take them. It can be really hard to think about and plan for them due to these complexities.

People died in Victoria on Black Saturday trying to save their animals or because they wouldn't leave their animals. They are very important to us and we feel responsible for their welfare. So it is helpful to think through, plan and prepare for what you will do with your animals. The brochure contains some good suggestions and advice in relation to this issue.

When back in the circle you may wish to circle round and ask for any reflections, stories, ideas or queries on this topic.

While each person may have their own set goal for how many days or weeks she would like to prepare, for the purposes of the program there are two worksheets to get participants started. One is for three days evacuation and the other is for ten days at home.

In the program we gave out the worksheets (see Part Two – Tools and Templates) as a form of 'homework' and asked participants to complete them at home in between sessions.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS:

If evacuating: will you have access to heat for cooking and washing utensils?

If staying at home: you can eat the contents of your fridge and freezer for the first three days, after that food will be inedible.

You need to think about what cooking options you will have if there is no electricity and what water you will have.

The week after participants have taken home the menu planner to be fill in, ask the group for an indication of who spent some time on this.

Depending on how many you might:

- Break into groups of three and share the menu planners they have done.
- Menu planners they have completed; Separate into two groups – evacuation and shelter in place; or
- Go around the group.

Naturally the first few participants will cover many of the ideas, so encourage remaining participants to only add topics that haven't been covered already.

At the end, circle round and ask:

“What are the best ideas you have heard and/or the best idea you think you have come up with?”

16. RECOVERY

Resources contains a Recovery Tips Sheet, which can be given out and perhaps talked through with examples by way of framing the session.

The Salvation Army has produce some very good resources on this topic. These can help people understand post-disaster scenarios and how long recovery might take.

Further information is available here: www.stillstanding.org.au/

The Phoenix Australia for Post Traumatic Mental Health and the Rural Health Foundation outline the very common mental reaction to disaster trauma - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

17. SCENARIOS

Asking participants to discuss certain scenarios is a useful way of thinking through a complex range of issues.

It helps if the scenarios are relevant and tailored for the group. Part Two – Tools and Templates contains examples that may be relevant, otherwise you can adapt or create your own.

The scenarios given in Part Two are for:

- Cyclone
- Gas mains rupture

- Pandemic
- Heatwave
- Prolonged power failure

The scenarios can either be worked through individually or in small groups, followed by a large group debrief and discussion of the issues, problems or solutions.

A separate and more involved 'Survival in the Wild after a Plane Crash' scenario that may be good for group discussion and collaboration is contained in Part Three – Resources. An alpine environment could be adapted to a plane crash in the desert if this is more relevant.

18. FINAL SESSION OF THE PROGRAM

The final session of the program contains several parts:

- A. Questions, activities or topics that have been requested but not dealt with
- B. Discussion of 'where to from here for the group'
- C. Evaluation
- D. Thanking participants and partners and giving certificates and/or small gifts
- E. Final reflections and comments from participants
- F. Closure

A. QUESTIONS, ACTIVITIES OR TOPICS THAT HAVE BEEN REQUESTED BUT NOT DEALT WITH

This is a time where you look back at participants' originally expressed hopes and expectations for the program and make sure they have been fulfilled. It is also a time to finish off or cover any topics that have been missed or requested.

B. DISCUSSION OF 'WHERE TO FROM HERE FOR THE GROUP'

This section can be a little daunting, for both the group and the facilitator as it is the first time the group is being asked to make decisions together. Using the talking piece initially may work well to allow everyone a voice before there is discussion. It also allows people to see where the will of the group may lie.

Offer to write up the notes from this section and email them out so that everyone has a written record of any agreements to start with.

The questions may include:

Circle Round:

- “What do you think about the group continuing?”
- “Are you interested in being involved?”
- “If yes what ideas do you have?”

Write participants’ ideas in a notebook (not on the board, as that will become the focus). Try to summarise at the end. At the end of the circle round, determine if there is enough interest in continuing. Check if there is general agreement about your conclusion.

If there is agreement to continue, brainstorm on the board what the participants would like the group to do, capturing any ideas that have already been suggested.

Then clarify :

- How often?
- Where?
- For how long?
- Will you meet for morning tea or lunch? Who will provide this?

The next issue is to determine the process for your group continuing to meet. It can be helpful to frame by asking:

“Most of us have been in groups that have worked really well either at work or in the community. What were the characteristics of these groups that made them work well? What do you believe contributes to successful groups?”

Write the group’s answers up on the board.

Then ask:

“Which of these would you like to incorporate into this group?”

“How will you run the first meeting be run?”

“How do you feel about newcomers joining the group? Do you want to put a limit on the size of the group?”

“Is anyone willing to offer to take on any roles in the group” (e.g. send out emails, book the venue, bring food etc)

C. EVALUATION

Allow time for the participants to complete the Most Significant Change evaluation (see Part 2) and advise participants they will be sent a post-program survey.

D. THANK PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS AND GIVE CERTIFICATES AND/OR SMALL GIFTS

Now is the time to thank the participants generally for their participation, courage and willingness to share. Also acknowledge any one who has made a particular contribution from the group or overcome significant barriers to attend. This can be done in the process of giving the women a certificate of participation (see example in Part Two – Tools and Resources) and a small gift (candles are good, as they are relevant and inexpensive).

It is also the time to acknowledge and thank others who helped organise the program, partners, stakeholders and funders.

E. FINAL REFLECTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

We closed the program by going around the circle and asking the women for their final thoughts and reflections on the program.

F. CLOSING WORDS OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

With the group standing up, in some way acknowledge the end of the program – sometimes leaving this to the group works. If it’s been a great program there may even be a group hug!

Section Four: WEATHER THE STORM PROGRAM

Section Four of the manual is empty! This is because every community is different. This is where we want you to add your own information and resources that are relevant to the specific needs of your community.



National Rural
Women's Coalition

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