



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department
**Australian Emergency
Management Institute**

People, Get Ready

A culturally inclusive emergency
management resource for teachers



TEACHING GUIDE

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Introduction

Like many countries, Australia is prone to a wide variety of natural hazards that can cause disasters. Being one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse countries in the world there is a need to build cohesive communities that can minimise the risks, respond to and effectively recover from disasters. *People, Get Ready* is a resource designed to build community resilience by providing practical teaching and learning ideas that:

- enhance student understanding of emergency management
- can be applied across a number of cultural backgrounds and adapted for specific cultural, language and religious contexts, and
- celebrate the diversity of students by incorporating their range of life experiences.

The ideas in *People, Get Ready* can be used with any students from Year 8-10, but are specifically designed to engage those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

What you will find

The *People, Get Ready* teaching guide is designed to help you teach in a culturally inclusive way. The guide gives you useful teaching tips, outlines the processes you can follow and provides ideas on how you can address the needs and experiences of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. It is divided into the following sections:

Teaching in a culturally inclusive way

This section looks at the cultural dimensions underpinning student behaviour, and explores the impact of cultural differences, including stereotypes.

About CALD students

This section highlights some of the key life experiences and challenges faced by students from culturally diverse backgrounds which may assist to inform your teaching of natural disasters and/or emergency management.

The importance of family

This section highlights the dynamics and some of the experiences of families with culturally diverse backgrounds.

Your school community

Provides links to demographic data and highlights some key characteristics of students' communities.

Addressing English language skills

Practical hints and tips for teachers

Glossary

Four lesson plans and direct curriculum links (where available) are on the Emergency Management for Schools website www.ema.gov.au/schools :

- Me and My Community
- Take the Communication Mission
- Experiences of Emergencies, and
- Families Preparing Together.

Customise to suit your context - make the ideas work for you and your students

The activities will engage and, at times, confront your students.

As you know your classes best, you will be able to adapt any of the activities to meet your own needs and to reflect an understanding of your students' sensitivities, experiences and backgrounds.

The lesson plans are available in both PDF and MS Word formats, to allow you to customise the activities for your students.

A learning sequence is provided in the lesson plan overview section of the People, Get ready section of the Emergency Management for Schools website. Or you can adapt it to meet your timelines, curriculum planning or assessment situation.

Natural disasters in the curriculum

Natural disasters and emergencies feature strongly across all state and territory curricula. Throughout this resource, the use of the words disaster and emergency are used interchangeably.

The importance of preparation

It is important at this stage to check your school's internal processes for dealing with some of the sensitivities that this topic may raise. It may be worthwhile to bring in the expertise of agencies working with survivors of torture and trauma, or of community leaders or workers.

People, Get Ready will help you and your students develop an understanding of emergency management as well as learn more about the importance of community and effective communication in building disaster resilient communities.

Background

The Australian Government, through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, provided funding from 2006-2010 to the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) to undertake a number of initiatives to build social cohesion and harmony through enhanced engagement in the areas of preparedness, prevention, response and recovery from emergencies.

National consultations

National consultations have been held with representatives from multicultural community organisations, teachers and staff from state and territory education departments. Participants at the consultations were concerned about the low levels of awareness of emergency management amongst families and communities from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Young people as important communicators

Given children's potential information brokering role and also the importance of the community as cultural facilitators, it was determined that a resource be developed in a culturally inclusive manner for teachers of young people in Year 8-10. In this way, the resource could be used to help build the capacity of culturally diverse communities to mitigate and respond to emergencies.

Teaching in a culturally inclusive way

What is covered in this section?

A number of tips are given on ways to:

- understand the cultural dimensions underpinning student behaviour
- incorporate the experiences of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- make it possible to discuss different experiences in a safe environment
- explore the impact of cultural differences, including stereotypes.

Why does teaching in a culturally inclusive manner matter?

Students from diverse language and cultural backgrounds can sometimes become alienated in classrooms that do not provide an opportunity to include their views. Lack of opportunity to express their point of view may indicate that their previous life and experience are not valuable.

A culturally inclusive approach helps to make the classroom a place where all students are able to speak about their views and experiences. A culturally inclusive classroom is safe; stereotypes are not used negatively to blame or scapegoat others. More importantly all students become more aware of the range of beliefs, experiences and coping strategies in a culturally inclusive environment.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

The following quotes show that everyone is influenced by the culture into which s/he is born and that culture is dynamic and evolving:

Culture is the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings, which is transmitted from one generation to another. (The Macquarie Encyclopaedic Dictionary)

Culture refers to all the accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of a given people. It is a body of common understanding. It is the sum total and the organisation or arrangement of the group's ways of thinking, feeling and acting... In this sense, of course, every people have a culture and no individual can live without culture. It is our culture that enables us to get through the day because we and the other people we encounter attach somewhat the same meanings to the same things. (Ina C. Brown, 1963, Understanding other cultures, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall)

In 1871 E.B. Taylor defined culture as 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and many other capabilities and habits acquired by...[members] of society'.

Culture means the total body of tradition borne by a society and transmitted from generation to generation. It thus refers to the norms, values, standards, by which people act, and it includes the ways distinctive in each society of ordering the world and rendering it intelligible. Culture is...a set of mechanisms for survival, but it provides us also with a definition of reality. It is the matrix into which we are born; it is the anvil upon which our persons and destinies are forged. (Robert Murphy, 1986, Culture and Social Anthropology: An Overture, 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, p14)

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS UNDERPINNING OUR BEHAVIOUR

Cultural dimensions underpin our behaviour, our responses to events and lifestyle preferences. They show in how we raise our children, how we interact in an informal setting and how we relate to our work colleagues.

They also impact on the way people behave during emergencies. For instance, a young person from a refugee background, who escaped from a country torn by civil strife where the police and military might have been part of the system of coercion and repression, might look at uniformed emergency services personnel with very different

eyes. They may have different experiences of being transported in buses, surrounded by police or emergency service workers or placed in stadiums or recovery centres.

People from countries with minimal support from the government in emergencies may not expect to receive aid – financial and emotional – during the recovery phase. Or they might be hesitant to ask for help for fear of the consequences.

People from countries with no extensive formalised volunteer involvement in emergency management might not understand the structure for provision of assistance by volunteers working in emergencies and may be wary of it.

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT WORLD VIEWS AND VALUES

There are many other cultural values and ways of seeing the world that might impact on how people behave in an emergency:

- Some cultures are far more hierarchical – there are clearly demarcated ranks and people are expected to defer to those in positions of authority, for example older family or community members. The idea of students being asked to take the lead in the development of a family emergency plan might seem quite incongruous to people from cultures where children ‘do as they are told’ and are not expected to take the initiative.
- Some cultures have far more strictly defined gender roles.
- Some cultures have a stronger connection to the environment. Natural disasters are seen as part of a larger plan, an integral part of life, as they are a part of the natural order of things. (This is particularly the case for some Indigenous Australians, and people from some African cultures.)

How to include a range of views;

- The sharing of experiences can be a powerful learning tool. Teachers are encouraged to state clear learning outcomes so that the sharing of experiences is positive and empowering for all involved.
- Be mindful of previous experiences of trauma and the danger of rekindling traumatic memories. Allow students to control their level of involvement, how much they disclose and in what ways.
- Explore the different family structures that may come into play during a discussion around the topic of an emergency.

- Ask the class to consider how different cultural and religious beliefs may influence the provision of care and support during emergencies, for example:
 - food and beverages provided in evacuation or relief centres, and
 - sleeping arrangements in evacuation or relief centres.
- Avoid presenting an ethnocentric point of view and giving the impression that this is a universal truth.
- Explore issues related to the students' own backgrounds and experiences in a variety of ways. Maximise the opportunities for students to show leadership.
- Develop case studies encouraging students to discuss their past experiences.
- Brainstorm what images are conjured up by words such as 'emergency', 'family,' 'disaster,' 'emergency services personnel'... (etc).

DEALING WITH STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes reduce a social group (e.g. ethnic group, religious group, gender) to simple representations, often exaggerating characteristics of a community.

These fixed and often exaggerated impressions, preconceived ideas and descriptions about an individual, group or society, can have a profoundly negative impact. When stereotypes are believed for a long period of time, peoples' minds can become fixed. It is then difficult to change attitudes or to replace stereotypes with facts.

Children develop stereotypes from very early in life. By 3 years of age, children can recognise people by their race. By 6 and 7 children begin to think based on stereotypes. Children are largely influenced by the attitudes of their community, family, peers and teachers.

It is therefore important that you challenge any stereotypes expressed by your students. Every member of a particular social group is an individual. Seeing some social groups as inferior is negative stereotyping and is unacceptable. Thinking like this can cause real problems in both homogenous and culturally diverse communities.

Encourage your students to recognise culture as complex and dynamic, with significant variations and flexibility.

By addressing stereotypes, showing the fallacy in these assumptions and challenging those who hold them, you will help to stop the perpetuation of fundamentally flawed and negative thinking.

About CALD students

What is covered in this section?

This section presents some of the key life experiences and challenges faced by young students from culturally diverse backgrounds which may assist to inform your teaching.

DIVERSITY & IDENTITY IN AUSTRALIA

Identity is a common area of difficulty for all young people, and has specific dimensions for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Newly arrived young people face specific difficulties as they are often experiencing transition to adulthood at the same time as transition to a new society. In their initial settlement period, they are likely to be focused on adapting to the new society – learning language, settling into a new home and school. They may particularly struggle to balance family expectations with those of the broader society, and to develop a sense of themselves in this turbulent time.

Acculturation

Acculturation, or cultural adjustment, is a key issue for newly arrived young people but may also be a significant intergenerational issue for second-generation young people.

Research in this area has identified four possible outcomes for the process of acculturation:

- assimilation - adopt new culture and reject old culture
- withdrawal - reject new culture and preserve or exaggerate old culture
- marginalisation - reject both old and new culture
- integration or biculturalism - maintain important aspects of old culture while also adopting parts of new culture.

This is not a static or linear process. Individuals may move between these different states at different times, depending on personal circumstances and experiences.

Culture is an important factor in identity development, and a challenge for many young people from culturally diverse backgrounds. They may feel pressured by family to both maintain their cultural heritage and succeed in mainstream society and may struggle to balance their parents'/community's expectations with those of their Australian peers/society.

Bicultural identity

The concept of 'bicultural identity' importantly recognises that young people actively negotiate their identity, drawing on aspects of their cultural background(s) and the cultural values of the new society.

They may also adapt according to the context, for example different aspects of identity may be more emphasised when at home than when out with peers. Young people recognise and value this diversity and flexibility, and this should be supported.

INTERGENERATIONAL ISSUES

The cultural adjustments that individual family members have to make may contribute to family conflict.

Newly arrived young people often assimilate faster than older family members. The older generation may remain marginalised from mainstream society. These disparities can become an issue particularly with regard to young people's independence. This may lead to some parents seeking to limit independence and reinforce traditional values and strict discipline, or the feeling that they have lost control and the capacity to discipline their children. Young people from culturally diverse backgrounds may feel pressure from their family to succeed in the broader society but also to maintain their cultural heritage.

RACISM

Racism is an ever-present reality for young people from culturally diverse backgrounds and impacts on identity development. Young people tell of experiences of harassment, violence, teasing and the general feeling that they do not belong. They also feel they are judged by stereotypes or by the behaviour of a few, particularly in the media. Racism affects young people's self-esteem, self-confidence and sense of connection and belonging to the broader community. Identity development occurs in a social context so it is important that the broader community is welcoming and value diversity.

As part of their anti-racism work, a group of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds in the western region of Melbourne (Western Young People's Independent Network), asked young people about their experiences of racism. Some comments they recorded include:

People automatically assume that I can't speak English and speak to me really slowly, just because I wear a hijab. (18 year old young person of Somali background)

I've had people at school, even people I thought were my friends, tell me that Asians are taking over Australia. How would Australians feel if they had a war and weren't let into another country so they could survive? (Young male of East Timorese background)

Strangers on the street will tell me to go back to my own country. 'Which country is that?' I ask them. 'I was born and raised here'. I'm sick of feeling like I don't belong in Australia. (Young woman of Eritrean background)

I had just walked into the shop when a security guard asked me to leave. (17 year old of Sudanese background)

Young people from culturally diverse backgrounds report feeling they are seen as a threat when they are simply 'hanging out' with their friends. They feel targeted by police and security and relate this problem to their high visibility and the prevailing stereotypes that young men from culturally diverse backgrounds are involved in gangs and are violent.

MUSLIM STUDENTS

It is important to bear in mind that whilst all adolescents have common issues to deal with, young Australian Muslims have had to deal with additional barriers since September 11 2001. In some instances these barriers have created worrying levels of isolation and marginalisation for young Australian Muslims.

In 2006, the Australian Multicultural Foundation, in collaboration with the Federal Government's Muslim Youth Sub-Group and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, hosted a national *Muslim Youth Summit* followed by *Youth Summits* in all states and territories. The Summits focused on finding practical solutions to key issues such as: identity, relationships, employment, education and training, and discrimination.

The following core issues were identified and discussed:

- perceived conflict between Muslim and Australian identity
- intergenerational conflict between parents and children especially; when parents are migrants and children have been born in Australia
- belonging versus marginalisation
- unemployment
- Muslims and the media and
- community capacity building.

For the full report including recommendations, go to: www.immi.gov.au.

HOW PAST EXPERIENCE IMPACTS ON LEARNING ABOUT EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

It's a good idea to think about your student population before you undertake any of the activities in this resource. Your students' experiences will impact on their reactions and comfort levels with the work you are doing. Be sensitive to their concerns or fears ... and be aware that silence doesn't always equate with agreement.

Some young migrant people, who have come to Australia as refugees from war-torn countries, may have had negative experiences of government agencies in their country of origin or in transit. Due to these experiences, they may find it difficult to re-establish trust with government agencies as many fear breaches in confidentiality. Where there has been past negative experience of emergency service personnel or police, these young people, their families and communities may mistrust personnel in uniform. This can be manifested in various ways, including avoiding contact with people performing these roles.

Trust can be encouraged by emphasising that many emergency services officers are friendly volunteers who are only intent on helping residents in times of emergency and crisis.

However, every individual will respond differently to life experiences. Some young people will be quite capable of differentiating between Australian police and emergency services personnel and uniformed officers back home.

Schools provide an opportunity to learn about emergency management in a safe environment.

The fear and mistrust of uniforms is very real for many children from war torn countries such as Africa ... but this is completely opposite for children from the Pacific who are used to people in uniforms helping at times of emergency ... You can't use blanket approaches when teaching this subject ... you have to understand where a child is coming from ... (NSW consultations).

CREATING A SAFE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The processes taught in the *Protective Behaviours* program provide a solid framework for class activities (NSW Police adopted the Protective Behaviours Program in 1986).

The programs constantly emphasise the messages that:

- we all have the right to feel safe all the time, and
- nothing is so awful that we cannot talk to someone about it.

The four strategies used are:

One Step Removed – Sensitive issues are framed in the third person so that students are not asked to place themselves in difficult or threatening situations.

Networking and Network Review – Students identify trusted adults, in addition to family members, to contact if they are not feeling safe. Students regularly review the people listed in their network and their continued availability.

Persistence – Provides encouragement to work through issues with identified trusted networks.

Protective Interrupting – Protects students from disclosing personal issues in a group setting. It requires sensitivity and use of protective and redirecting statements.

Following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the Attorney-General's Department commissioned the publication of *Guiding principles for school based response following disasters*. This document and contact details for agencies working to help people who have experienced trauma and torture can be found at

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/reliefweb_pdf/node-22068.pdf.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

What is covered in this section?

This section presents some of the key life experiences and challenges faced by families from culturally diverse backgrounds. Special attention is given to the experiences of people from a refugee background. This section gives an insight into how family

dynamics, power relationships, or gender issues for example, impact on how families become informed and prepare for emergencies.

SETTLING IN AUSTRALIA

A number of demographic variables come together to affect the settlement process families go through – their experience before migration, the employment history of the adult family members, their educational background, their age on arrival, the family composition (unaccompanied young adults and children, single parent families, extended families ...).

During the initial settlement process, families are almost exclusively focused on issues directly affecting them: finding housing, jobs, schools, child care. It is difficult for other messages and information to be heard during this stage.

The settlement process does not have a ‘due by date’; there is no magic moment when a family is truly settled. Settlement is an ongoing process. Different life-stages can create new challenges for families particularly when they live in a different environment away from support networks and familiar routines.

FAMILY DYNAMICS AND THE ROLE OF CULTURAL VALUES

In Australia, there is an emphasis on equality between men and women and more flexibility in gender roles so that gender roles overlap. Some parents may feel they are losing control and their role is being diminished, as their children are encouraged at school to become independent and develop their decision making skills. This can cause conflict within the family. Similarly, although some cultures may accept that children will be the conduit for information, some will find this challenging to their family structures.

HOW FAMILIES FIND INFORMATION

Newly arrived families often rely on:

- Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) and networks
- ethnic radio and talk back
- the internet (widely used amongst the young and educated)
- community newsletters in languages other than English and
- institutions of faith which facilitate information sharing among their membership.

THE ROLE AND PLACE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE FAMILY – COLLECTIVIST OR INDIVIDUALISTIC?

If the family comes from a more collectivist culture (where the individual only exists through his/her membership and role in a group) then the family might ask – how do we develop a family evacuation plan when our family lives across a number of households? A family meeting may involve a number of generations coming together to discuss the plan, with older members (who may not necessarily be the most well informed) taking a leadership role. In collectivist societies, maintaining harmony and taking into account the needs and feelings of others is paramount.

This approach to family emergency planning is at odds with the very individualistic approach of Australians from English-speaking backgrounds. For these Australians, independence is considered an extremely important personal characteristic. In a more individualistic context, family structures are characterised as nuclear rather than extended. A more typical family evacuation plan for these families would be to focus on looking after oneself and members of one's immediate family. Individuals would be expected to try to meet their obligations on their own – if each individual takes care of him/herself, then the well-being of the group is safeguarded.

Your school community

What is covered in this section?

This section presents some information on the wide range of communities that might exist within your school community and provides ideas on how to gather this information.

LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND RELIGION

Australians from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds do not form a single homogenous group.

In getting to know particular multicultural communities and the individuals within them, it is important to recognise that language, culture and religion interact in different ways:

- People who share a language do not necessarily share a culture or religion.
- There are many culturally different places in the world where English or Spanish are the main languages.
- People born in the same country or region do not necessarily have the same first language.
- India, China, and the countries of Africa encompass huge cultural and linguistic diversity, but even small European countries (for example, Belgium, Switzerland or Finland) can be home to different non-immigrant language communities.
- Religion is not bounded by culture or language.
- Not all followers of one religion have the same culture.
- There are important differences in culture and language between, for example, a Polish Catholic and a Filipino Catholic, or a Sudanese Muslim and a Malaysian Muslim, or a Buddhist from Sri Lanka and one from Korea.

To assist in teaching about emergency management you may like to start by collecting demographic data to establish a profile of your students, their families and the wider community. This profile may assist you to identify the likelihood of your students having had experience of disasters.

STRATEGIES FOR FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

1. Speak with your local council to determine local demographics.

Your local council should have access to detailed local demographics and will be able to advise you on the major ethnic groups in your area. The Lesson Plan *Me and My Community* provides useful links to help here.

2. Make contact with local ethnic organisations.

Local ethnic organisations are generally closely connected with the community they represent. It is likely they will be able to provide on-the-ground information about their community members.

3. Encourage the community to come to you:

- Once you have established informal networks, you may consider inviting community leaders to come to speak to the school community or involve them in the development of the school's Emergency Management Plan. Their input will give you insights you may not have considered. Equally important, this approach signals that the school sees the community members as having the expertise to help identify not just the problem but to help form the solution.
- Invite emergency service agencies to use your school to deliver information sessions to parents and community members. Face-to-face presentations have an advantage over printed material in that they can also be used as 'get to know you' sessions, in a neutral environment and where people can ask questions and find out what **they** want to know about natural disaster and emergency management.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY PROFILE CHECKLIST

The following checklist may prompt you to think about your students and their communities' cultural, migration and settlement histories. It might be useful when working on the *Me and My Community* and *Take the Communication Mission* lessons.

Background	Questions to ask: How does this impact on emergency management?
<p>What is the country of origin or region?</p> <p>What are the reasons for migration?</p> <p>Was it for economic or for political reasons? Were they displaced by conflict?</p> <p>Is it a refugee community?</p>	<p>How do community members view Australian society and institutions?</p> <p>How integrated are its members?</p> <p>How closed or open to outsiders is it?</p> <p>How educated or literate are community members?</p>
<p>How long has this community been in Australia?</p> <p>Has migration ceased? Is it ongoing?</p>	<p>How diverse is the community and complex its networks?</p> <p>What is the level of infrastructure support?</p> <p>What about the availability of bilingual professionals?</p> <p>How localised or dispersed is it?</p> <p>How integrated are people, and how well do they understand Australian cultural norms?</p> <p>How well do they speak English?</p> <p>How dependent are community members on each other?</p> <p>Does it include two or three Australia-born generations?</p> <p>Does it include retirees or seniors?</p>
<p>What languages are spoken at home and in the community?</p> <p>How well do people speak English?</p> <p>Are they likely to be literate in their own language?</p>	<p>How should information be presented - text based, oral, visual?</p>

THE PREPARED COMMUNITY

During disasters, there may be a delay before outside help arrives.

At first, self-help is essential and depends upon a prepared community. That is, a community which has:

- an alert, informed and actively-aware population
- an active and involved local government, and
- agreed, coordinated arrangements for disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Addressing English language skills

What is covered in this section?

A number of tips are given on ways to develop materials that:

- use simple, direct, concrete language
- show as well as explain
- explain jargon, and
- use visual formats as alternatives to written language.

Do you need to consider English language skills? What can you do to:

- keep language simple
- expand language skills
- maximise opportunities to practise English
- integrate language work into all classroom activities, and
- communicate with families and communities.

Remember

Low English language and literacy skills do not equal low life skills or intelligence. Some students have direct experience of disasters which have provided invaluable life skills.

TIPS AND IDEAS ON ORAL COMMUNICATION

Use simple, direct, concrete language

‘If there is a fire, all students are to meet at the school’s sports oval’ is easier to understand than, ‘In case of a fire all students should proceed in a timely manner to the sports oval’.

Acronyms and specialised language (jargon) assume a lot of prior knowledge – students born in Australia from a very early age have heard about the SES, CFA, ‘burn offs’, ‘rips’ etc through their families and friends, news broadcasts and the public domain.

Many students from culturally diverse backgrounds, their families and communities will not have had the same exposure to these words and thus even if they understand

what they mean in a dictionary sense, may not have the depth of understanding that comes from a long-term association of these words.

Show as well as explain

Walk as well as talk students through activities and procedures, for example, if the class is to develop a family fire plan, make time for students to act out some of their plans so that they have a chance to comment on each others' plans and to learn about possible consequences and alternatives.

Talk and chalk

Use the whiteboard when you present information.

- Write up key words, and concepts.
- Always explain acronyms (e.g. SES, CFA, NSWFB)
- If you recommend further reading, include some simple or general texts or links to websites in languages spoken in your classroom.

Opportunities to practise

Structure ample opportunities for learners to practise discussing an issue. Small group work is usually more effective at the outset.

TIPS AND IDEAS ON WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Integrated language work

Resources can present lesson content and at the same time provide language practice in reading, writing, listening and speaking such as vocabulary and grammar extension activities.

Language practice may be integrated with classroom activities around natural disasters.

Provide written models to demonstrate the genre or key language structures. For example, plans, incident reports, memos.

Provide students with the opportunity to become familiar with the language used in an emergency context.

TIPS AND IDEAS ON ASSESSMENT

Maximise opportunities for students to demonstrate skills

As you know, there are many different ways of assessing students beyond the traditional hard copy testing. Try to maximise the opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills. Does the assessment have to be conducted in English? Does it have to be text based? Students may be able to more precisely show their understanding through a visual representation or role play.

Provide clear guidelines

Provide clear and detailed guidelines for assessment tasks. In this way, learners have a model of what is required to use as a basis. For example, if students are to produce a report as part of an assessment task:

- Explain and document precisely what is to be included in the report.
- Provide examples of appropriate structure and style of language.

TIPS AND IDEAS ON DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION STYLES

Alternatives to written communication

Even students who speak English well may not be able to read English. They may not be overly familiar with English script, or they may not be literate in their own language. They may come from a culture where spoken communication takes precedence over the written form.

- Information may be communicated **face-to-face**.
- Complex information may be transferred through **identified community leaders**.
- Information may be presented in a **visual format**. Pictures, symbols and other visual aides are a great way to make sure a message is clearly understood. Pictures and recognised universal symbols can be a quick and effective way of communicating to people from diverse language backgrounds.
- Some cultures have a conversational style that is non-direct.
- Some cultures use non-verbal cues such as eye contact. Eye contact can be a sign of disrespect or even belligerence and so as a mark of respect, a student will minimise eye contact with an older person and a parent will do the same with a teacher.

Translated information

Having information presented in their language and in English means that they can learn the word and use it in a disaster and clearly understand what it means.

Lesson Plan Overview

The *People, Get Ready* lesson plans will help your Year 8-10 students understand their place in the community and help to build resilience through preparation and effective response in times of disaster.

These lesson plans celebrate diversity and encourage students to share their life and cultural experiences with each other.

This teaching guide provides useful advice on what you might need to consider when discussing emergencies and disasters with students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Of course, you understand your students better than anyone and you will make your own professional judgements about what activities are most appropriate with the classes you teach.

You can download these lesson plans in both PDF and MS Word formats from the *People, Get Ready* website.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY SEQUENCE

As you know, students in this age group need to consider how abstract concepts could potentially impact on them and their own situation.

The flow chart below presents you with a suggested sequence of lesson plans, starting with Me and My Community.



ME AND MY COMMUNITY

Think about your place in the world, the different communities you belong to and what makes you YOU! These activities encourage students to consider individual and community perspectives and explore their sense of belonging as a citizen of the world. Working individually and together, students will develop their understanding of the sensitivities of communicating with different communities, strengthen the similarities and devise a communications strategy for a target community audience.

Duration: 5 – 10 periods

TAKE THE COMMUNICATION MISSION

Following on from Me and My Community, these activities place students in the role of advertising executives whose brief is to research, design and make a television or radio advertisement to help newly arrived people and those in their community with lower level English language skills to be better prepared for emergency situations. With real purpose and for a real audience, the students will explore the use of text, symbols and key messages in conveying their point of view.

Duration: 5 – 10 periods

EXPERIENCES OF EMERGENCIES

How do people cope in an emergency? Students will interview and collect stories from people in their family or local community and report back about their experiences.

Duration: 2 – 4 periods

FAMILIES PREPARING TOGETHER

What disasters are relevant to your area? Where would you go to for help? Would you know what to do?

Students will create an evacuation plan for their own home and help their family to prepare for a possible emergency.

Duration: 2 – 4 periods

Glossary

Word/Phrase	Definition
Acculturation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of borrowing between cultures, marked by the continuous transmission of elements and traits between different peoples and resulting in new and blended patterns. • The modification of one culture through direct and prolonged contact with another, usually more technologically complex culture (distinguished from assimilation).³ The process of socialisation. (The Macquarie Dictionary)
Avalanche	An avalanche is caused when a build up of snow is released down a slope, and is one of the major dangers faced in the mountains in winter.
Bi-cultural	Of or relating to two distinct cultures or geographic region. It is two distinctive cultural traditions – having or combining two cultures (Kim, 2001)
Bushfire	Every summer, Australia has a large number of wildfires (which we call bushfires), usually caused by lightning or humans. Most are not disasters. But, if not quickly detected and extinguished, even a small fire can get out of control and possibly cause a disaster.
Community	Communities are groups of people linked together by a shared location, experience or function. People may belong to more than one community. Within a community there may be a range of opinions and views.
Consequence	This is the outcome or impact of an event or hazard.
Consultation and communication	Because emergency risk management deals with events which do not happen very often, communication and consultation are essential components. They will: improve people’s understanding of risks and the ERM process; ensure that the varied views of stakeholders are considered; and make all participants aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Context	The context reflects the situation in the local community: the community's issues and concerns. Understanding the context enables decisions that will impact on the community in addressing risks and how to treat them.
Cyclone	Tropical cyclones (known as <i>hurricanes</i> in North America, <i>typhoons</i> in Asia) are like giant whirlwinds of air and dense cloud spiralling at over 120 km/h around a central 'eye' of extreme low pressure. Australia's cyclone season is usually November to April. Cyclones mainly affect coastal areas north of Perth along the WA and NT coasts, most of the Qld coast and occasionally the far northern NSW coast. The greatest threat lies north of the Tropic of Capricorn.
Disasters	In the Australian Emergency Management Glossary a disaster is defined as: A serious disruption to community life which threatens or causes death or injury in that community and/or damage to property which is beyond the day-to-day capacity of the prescribed statutory authorities and which requires special mobilisation and organisation of resources other than those normally available to those authorities. Disasters of all kinds happen when hazards seriously affect communities. The impact of a disaster can be minimised if the community is well prepared for it. What are the characteristics that make disasters different from accidents?
Disasters-Variables	Disasters of all kinds and sizes happen when hazards seriously affect communities. They can occur anywhere and they are generally unpredictable. Disasters can vary in the following ways.
Disasters-Cause	Disasters can result from a natural or unnatural hazard (e.g. flood or transport accident).
Disasters-Frequency and risk	Some disasters occur more often and therefore present a greater risk than others (e.g. in Australia there is a much higher risk of damage from severe storms than landslides).
Disasters-Duration of impact	Some disasters are of limited duration, while others last for long periods (e.g. a tornado may last a few minutes, but a drought may go on for years).

Disasters- Speed of onset	Some disasters happen suddenly, while others have a warning period of hours or days (e.g. there may be little warning of a flash flood, whereas the relatively slow onset of a cyclone allows a longer warning time).
Disasters- Scope of impact	Some disasters affect a relatively small area, and others affect whole countries (e.g. a volcanic eruption compared to widespread famine). Others, caused by a single hazard and initially affecting a small area, can cause a chain reaction involving several other hazards covering a much larger region (e.g. an earthquake which damages roads causing transport accidents, ruptures gas pipes causing fires, and fractures a dam causing flash flooding).
Disasters- Destructive potential	This can vary enormously with the type of hazard (e.g. a bridge collapse is a localised event causing damage over a much smaller area than a cyclone).
Disasters- Predictability	Some hazards follow certain patterns, others don't (e.g. floods are usually confined to known floodplains, but toxic gas emissions have no boundaries).
Disasters- Control and human vulnerability	In some disasters we are totally helpless and must leave them to run their course. In others we can do something to lessen the impact, even if we cannot prevent them from occurring (e.g. unlike cyclones, bushfires can often be prepared for and controlled; however, more Australians are vulnerable as bushfires happen more frequently and affect larger areas)
Earthquake	Earthquakes are a shaking or trembling of the earth's crust caused by a release of huge stresses due to underground volcanic forces, the breaking of rock beneath the surface, or by sudden movement along an existing fault line. Compared to other countries in our region, earthquake activity in Australia is low. However, all states and territories have experienced them.
Elements at Risk	Elements at risk are the things that can be affected when a disaster occurs. These can be people, livestock and pets, buildings, businesses, public facilities (such as parks or swimming pools) and infrastructure (such as roads, bridges etc).

Emergency	An event, actual or imminent, which endangers or threatens to endanger life, property or the environment, and which requires a significant and coordinated response.
Emergency Plan	A documented scheme of assigned responsibilities, actions and procedures, required in the event of an emergency.
Emergency Risk Management (ERM)	Emergency Risk Management (ERM) is a process which involves dealing with risks to the community arising from emergency events.
Ethnocentric	The belief in the inherent superiority of one's own group and culture accompanied by a feeling of contempt for other groups and cultures. <i>(The Macquarie Dictionary)</i>
Environment	The environment is the place we live in: natural or built. It comprises social, physical and built elements like people, places and things.
Evacuation	The planned relocation of persons from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas to safer areas and eventual return.
Event	Occurrence of a particular set of hazardous circumstances.
Fire	See bushfire. Fire can also occur in buildings and human made structures.
Flood	Floods occur when water covers land which is normally dry. They may result from prolonged or very heavy rainfall, severe thunderstorms, monsoonal (wet season) rains in the tropics, or tropical cyclones. Other, less common causes include snow-melt, dam failure, or storm surge and tsunami - both involving rapid seawater flooding. People who live near rivers, or in low-lying coastal areas, live with the greatest threat of floods.
Hazard	Hazards are dangerous conditions or events with potential for injury, loss of life, and/or damage to property, agriculture or environment. They can be grouped into two broad categories: Natural (hazards with meteorological, geological, biological or extraterrestrial origins) and Unnatural (hazards with human-caused or technological causes).

Landslide	Landslides usually involve the movement of large amounts of earth, rock, sand or mud, or any combination of these, down a slope. Causes include earthquakes, volcanoes, soil saturation from rainfall or seepage, or human activity (i.e. vegetation removal, construction of roads, railways or buildings on steep terrain).
Mudslide	See landslide.
Preparedness	Being prepared means that specific arrangements are in place to ensure that, should an emergency occur all those resources and services which are needed to cope with the effects of an event/disaster can be efficiently mobilised and deployed.
Prevention	Regulatory and physical measures to eliminate or reduce the incidence or severity of emergencies.
Recovery	The coordinated process of supporting emergency-affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing.
Response	Measures taken in anticipation of, during, and immediately after emergencies to ensure the effects are minimised.
Review	Reviewing or monitoring the activities in each stage of the ERM process is important to ensure that the main stakeholders have been consulted and their views and opinions included in the status report and that key pieces of information and evidence are recorded and then used to help make decisions about further activities. Reviewing is also important because circumstances can change and so changes might need to be made to a plan.
Risk	The chance of something happening that will have an impact on an element of the community and the environment.
Severe weather	Any atmospheric condition potentially destructive or hazardous to human beings.
Source(s) of risk	Sources of risk are identified hazards that cause potential harm, for example bushfire, flood, landslide etc.

Stakeholders	Those people and organisations who may affect, be affected by or perceive themselves to be affected by, a decision, activity or risk.
Storm surge	Storm surge is potentially the most destructive phenomenon associated with cyclones that make landfall. A storm surge is a raised dome of water about 60 – 80 kilometres across and typically about 2 – 5 metres higher than a normal tide level. If the surge coincides with a high tide, massive flooding and additional destruction is likely to occur.
Tsunami	Tsunami are seismic sea waves. Their name is a Japanese word meaning 'harbour waves'. A tsunami is a series of travelling ocean waves of extremely long length and period. They are caused by under-sea events like earthquakes, landslides and volcanic eruptions; or by other natural events such as ocean meteorite impacts, or large landslides into bays or lakes.
Weather alert	A warning broadcast on radio or television of an approaching storm or gale, or of an impending cold change