

Cards for **Calamity**

A Facilitator's Guide

The road ahead after disaster will feel uncharted and overwhelming for many, yet each individual holds great potential for shaping their own recovery and for supporting others. To do this, information and knowledge are key.

Cards for Calamity help people navigate life after disaster. Comprised of tales, tips and tricks, these 70 cards make life a little easier. In practical and profound ways, they provide a guide through the months and years after disaster. To come out of a disaster the best way possible, it helps to have knowledge and inspiration from others who have been there before.

Cards for Calamity will help people feel more confident, make decisions and prompt conversations to see affected people through the tough times after disaster.

In group settings, the Cards for Calamity will:

- Normalise the reactions people experience after disaster (reducing anxiety)
- Encourage social connection and peer support
- Support group-efficacy and constructive problem-solving
- Provide a recovery-knowledge base for informed decision making.

The Cards for Calamity back story

Cards for Calamity are built on learning and experience from global disasters. They are created by **Hummingly** who have more than 15 years of experience in disaster recovery and have collated recovery wisdom from around the world, including from bushfires here in Australia.

Hummingly supports people, communities and workplaces to do stress and uncertainty well. Years of hard-won knowledge and wisdom have been distilled to help at this tough time.

Short videos on the Cards for Calamity as spoken by those who've encountered them.



[How these cards helped me and my family](#)



[Why I wished I'd had these cards](#)

"I have to say the Cards for Calamity are incredible. The advice is spot-on and of tremendous value to anyone who has just come through a disaster. The cards can be used continually as an aid throughout the long disaster recovery."

— **DOUG AHLERS** (SENIOR FELLOW, PROGRAM ON CRISIS LEADERSHIP, HARVARD UNIVERSITY)

"These cards offer advice from disaster recovery professionals who have 'been there', many times over. These cards help you learn how to cope, how to plan, how to laugh, and how to cry; without beating yourself up and without expecting too much from yourself and those around you."

— **MARY COMERIO** (PROFESSOR OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKLEY)

"The cards are terrific. They're short and to the point - just what's needed when there's so much going on and you don't have energy or time. This was our experience after the Black Saturday bushfires."

— **KERRY CLARKE AND LARRY CHALLIS** (COMMUNITY RECOVERY COMMITTEE, WHITTLESEA, AUSTRALIA)



Using the cards in groups

In-person gatherings

Purpose: Support people to engage quickly in meaningful discussions, mobilise a peer support network and normalise experiences for people.

1. Provide each person with a **Cards for Calamity** card.
2. Divide people into groups of up to 6 or into pairs.
3. Each person in the group or pair reads their card aloud to their group/partner.
4. The groups or pairs answer the following questions:
 - Can anyone relate to this card?
 - Are there any cards here that surprise you or raise questions for you?
 - How have you dealt with some of the things on the cards?

Disastrous dinner with a difference

Gathering neighbours or community members for a meal regularly is a great way of supporting recovery, or try this idea with your next dinner event.

Virtual gatherings

Purpose: Support people to engage quickly in meaningful discussions, mobilise a peer support network and normalise experiences for people in a safe way given the COVID-19 context.

When each person has their own set of Cards for Calamity:

1. Prior to the online gathering, each person picks one card that resonates for them for any reason - it might be a card they can relate to, a card they find surprising, a card with a situation they want to prepare for...
2. Each person takes a turn to share both the card and their reason for picking it. Depending on time, take the opportunity to share responses and ideas from the group before moving to the next person and the next card.

When the facilitator is the only person with a set of Cards for Calamity:

1. Prior to the online gathering, pre-select a short-list of 4-6 cards that you think might be topical for the group right now.
2. Read two of the cards aloud and ask for reflections on whichever of these cards people can relate to. Encourage people to share their experiences and the ways they are similar or different to that of the cards, their questions for the group and reactions they had to the cards.
3. Repeat with a further two cards and so on.

Virtual lunch

Purpose: Support people to engage quickly in meaningful discussions, mobilise a peer support network and normalise experiences for people in a safe way given the COVID-19 context.

1. People choose two cards - one that represents how they are feeling right now and one card they find uplifting.
2. Connect with a friend online or a community group and share why you chose the cards.

Community virtual meeting check-in

Purpose: Raising issues, encouraging constructive decision-making and maintaining a sense of momentum.

1. Choose a card to share that introduces an issue you would like to raise or supports a decision you would like made.
2. Each person at home uses a cord or some string to create the shape of the recovery journey (you will find this represented as a graph on one of the cards) on a table. Ask people in the virtual meeting to choose cards relevant to them and place them on their string graph representing the journey.
3. Ask the following questions:
 - What can we control on this journey?
 - If we have to wait on certain decisions/actions how will we support each other and make the most of the wait?
 - What is likely to come up that we can prepare for?
 - Who do we need to reach out to who can support us on this journey?

Difficult conversations

Purpose: To constructively manage tension, competing priorities and conflict.

1. In a group setting, each member of the group chooses a card that represents a difficult conversation they would like to have. Each person reads the card to introduce the issue.

The rule is that the person/group can vent about the issue on the card for 50% of the time and then thinks of actions/opportunities for the other 50% of the time. If the group is not in a space for this process, then gently ask questions that lead the group towards actions and opportunities-type thinking.

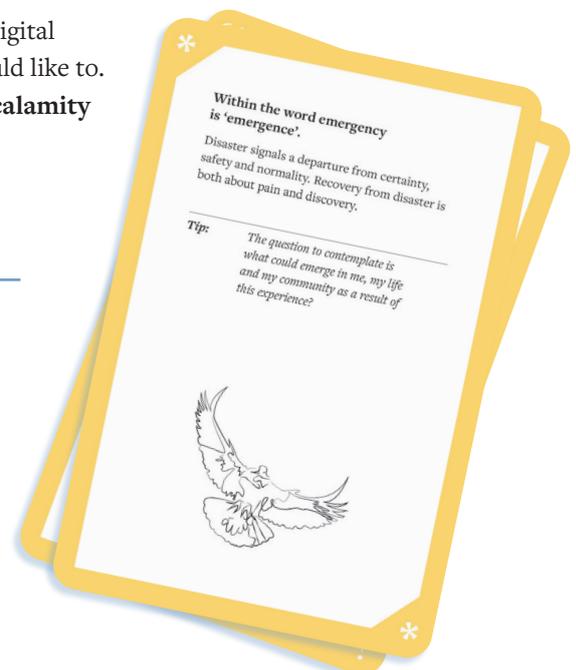
Make your own

Purpose: Taking meaning from experiences and sharing learning with others. This exercise can be used as a check-in and to get a sense of where the community's at. It can also be used as a part of a real-time learning or monitoring process.

1. Use the cards as an example and then ask community members to make their own cards that describe their experience with tips or questions that would be helpful to others.
2. Collect the cards and share on digital platforms if the community would like to. We'd love you to tag [#cardsforcalamity](#) so we can share your ideas with others.

* **Facilitators please note:**

Thoughtful and empathetic facilitation is important, including giving thought to the appropriate choice of exercise for the context and the audience. Be aware of this and ready to link people to support services and referral pathways.



Ways for people to use the cards at home

Stick a card on the fridge

Purpose: To support family cohesion and decision-making at the household level.

1. Each member of the household chooses one card to put on the fridge for the week. Discuss why they chose that card.
2. Repeat each week.

Walk and talk

Purpose: To encourage social connection, physical wellbeing and reflection time to work through issues and decisions.

1. Ring a friend or neighbour and organise a walk and talk. Each choose one card to bring on the walk, swap cards, read them to each other and discuss the content on your walk.
or
A virtual option for the walk and talk is to put headphones in, text each other a photo of the card you would like to discuss and walk alone but talk together.

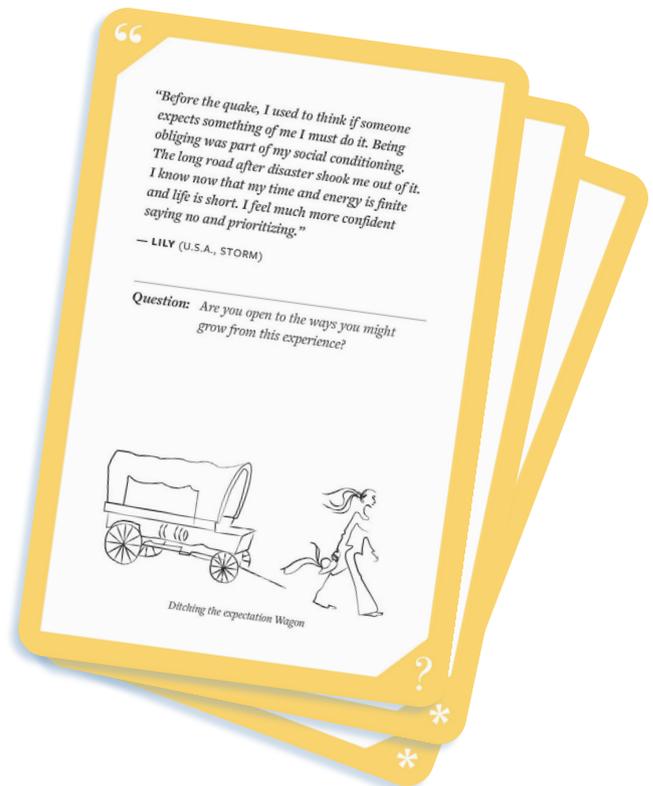
Special delivery

Purpose: To reduce the impacts of isolation and to ensure people do not feel forgotten by their communities and networks.

1. Pop a card that you think a friend or neighbour would like to receive in an envelope and put it in their letterbox with a note and something tasty to eat.

* Share with us:

We'd love to hear your ideas and experiences on how these cards are used. Please feel free to share any photos (with permission) and reflections with us – you'd make our day. We love to see these cards in use and to hear how they are helping you or your community. To do so please tag #cardsforcalamity on your choice of social media.



A framework for recovery group conversations

Below is a loose framework which is useful as a guide to facilitating recovery conversations.

1. Start the conversation

Bring people together and start the conversation. In the world of coronavirus this needn't mean in the same room. Get creative with how you connect. The **Cards for Calamity** provide an easy way to begin a conversation and to explore what is happening for people.

2. What is happening for people?

Providing the space for people to share their experiences and frustrations is important – it allows people to feel less alone in their experience.

3. Provide space for emotions

Recovery involves a multitude of emotions from anger, frustration, grief to hope and a sense of pride. We are often the hardest on ourselves when we experience reactions or emotions, and so it can be anxiety-reducing for people to realise they're normal. Having the space to safely acknowledge and share emotion is part of moving forwards toward recovery.

4. Move towards constructive action:

Aim to move the last third of the session towards a *What next?* conversation. What themes or challenges has the conversations brought to the surface? This is the time to explore ideas and actions at both the individual and collective level. Sometimes the action people would like is not available to them and so a helpful question to ask at the individual level is, “*What can I control?*” and then focus ideas and actions here. For example, if having to wait on planning decisions the focus of control might be, what can I do to make that wait the best possible for me? Another helpful question might be, “*What support do you need to put the ideas you like into action?*”

This step isn't about rushing action and decision-making, but it's helpful for people to have the space to constructively problem solve and explore possibilities.

As a group, is there something you can do or influence as a collective? And if so, what rules or boundaries could be put in place to keep this action and collective energy constructive? Keep asking, “*Are we still being constructive?*”

“It's very important not to get seduced in joining the choir of the disenchanted that lament together, gossip together, feed off the bitterness. But instead to have one person sink and have the other one say, ‘Don't go there.’”

— ESTHER PEREL (PSYCHOTHERAPIST)

5. Close:

Bring the session to a close ending on a warm, positive note. A message of encouragement or hope or ending with a round of what people are feeling proud of or grateful for are some ways to end a session. Read the room and ensure an ‘optimistic’ positive close doesn't feel too alienating for those who are having a difficult time – in this instance providing a sense of reassurance about not going through this alone might be more appropriate. Draw attention to supports that are available.