



## **The Potential Impact of Cumulative Exposure to Trauma**

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Australians have been traumatized by multiple natural and health emergencies that are meant to be "once-in-a-hundred year events" - but they seem to have hit us within the space of just over a year! And when we don't get enough time between traumatic experiences - like bushfires, pandemics, and floods - to recover, it can have profound effects on both our mental and physical health.

This cumulative exposure has been documented following other disasters, including the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina, where people who were exposed to one disaster, then another one within a short period of time, had significantly higher rates of both physical and mental ill-health.

Physically, cumulative exposure to trauma can lead to respiratory issues, heart palpitations, fatigue, headaches, and migraines. Psychologically, it can lead to elevated rates of generalized anxiety disorder, major depression, and PTSD.