



Scenario 4: Background

Across the world, rising global temperatures are having a catastrophic effect, driving changing weather patterns and causing more frequent and severe extreme weather events including heatwaves, bushfires, droughts, severe storms, floods and cyclones.

Extreme weather events often result in significant human, economic and environmental loss.

Amid these challenges, healthcare professionals and community members play a crucial role in emergency responses and broader health system adaptation to climate change.

Instructions

- This simulation will be conducted as a 'table-top' group-based simulation activity.
- Participants should form into six groups. Each group will have a pack of cards that profiles a different extreme weather event.
- **Read the first two cards in your pack only. The remaining cards are to be left upside down** until the facilitator calls 'start', at which time your group is to read and discuss how you would respond to the situation described on the **next card only**.
- At specific points in time, the facilitator will call 'next card' and your group will turn over the next card and discuss how you would respond to the unfolding situation described.
- When responding to the situations described in the scenarios, it is important to think broadly and consider more than the immediate healthcare concerns presented. Your focus should be on coordination of the emergency response, as well as prioritisation and communication.
- **While you may not feel that you have the experience to manage the situations presented, you may in fact be the most experienced person in a disaster situation and others will turn to you for advice – this simulation is about being resourceful and creative ... so do the best you can with the information at hand.**
- At the end of the simulation activity, the facilitator will lead a debrief and discussion with the whole group.

Scenario 4: The university becomes an evacuation centre

Part 1

The region where you live has experienced nine consecutive days of temperatures exceeding more than 40 °C. Bushfires began in the south and have destroyed nearly 4000 hectares of land and multiple homes. Hundreds of people have been evacuated.

With fires less than 100 metres from a local residential aged care facility, and evacuation centres being either at capacity or unable to accommodate the needs of residents with cognitive and/or mobility issues, your university has been contacted for support. At 8.30pm you receive a phone call stating that your help is needed - the simulation centre is to be converted into an evacuation centre for 60 of the residents who will be arriving in less than an hour.

What are your immediate priorities?

Scenario 4: The university becomes an evacuation centre

Part 2

It is 9.15pm. The first residents have arrived in the dark car park accompanied by a few of the staff from the residential aged care facility. They need to be escorted to their temporary accommodation. Many of the residents are frail with impaired mobility and some are confused, disoriented and distressed.

How are you going to manage these challenges?

Scenario 4: The university becomes an evacuation centre

Part 3

It is the next morning and you've been informed that the residents and staff may need to remain at the university for up to a week. While some have settled in well, others are tired and frightened in the unfamiliar environment. Some are getting increasingly agitated.

How will you support the needs of these older people and their carers over the next week?

Scenario 4: The university becomes an evacuation centre

Reflection

What might be the immediate and longer term social/emotional/mental health impacts of this extreme weather event?

You are aware that changing weather patterns will result in more frequent and severe extreme weather events such as bushfires. What advice would you give to residential aged care facilities and universities to help them better prepare for such events?