



# Supporting newcomers after the 2024 Jasper Wildfire

The 2024 Jasper Wildfire deeply affected everyone in the community. While recovery is challenging for all, newcomer employees often face additional, layered difficulties due to their immigration status, language barriers, and limited social networks. These ongoing challenges make recovery even more complex.

## Challenges newcomers face after the wildfire

Jasper's Newcomer Network has identified challenges that newcomers may be experiencing:

### Trauma and stress

Many people still feel anxious, sad, or unsure about the future. Some newcomers report that the trauma has impacted their memory and language skills.

### Difficulty accessing information

It can be hard to find clear, up-to-date information about local services and recovery programs – especially for those still learning English.

### Feeling alone

Newcomers may feel socially isolated. They may not have friends or family nearby for emotional and practical support.

### Housing insecurity

Affordable housing is difficult to find after the wildfire. Many people are living in temporary housing or sharing small, crowded spaces.

### Employment disruption

Many businesses are still recovering. Workers may have fewer shifts or less stable hours.

### Shifts in workplace culture

Ongoing stress can make it hard for teams to work well together. Newcomers may feel left out, misunderstood, or disconnected from co-workers who are also struggling.

### Your leadership matters.

As an employer, you play an important role in supporting newcomers during the recovery process.

This resource includes practical information and actions you can take to support your employees.





## Communicating after a traumatic event

The 2024 Jasper Wildfire was a traumatic and stressful event for many people. The impacts may be long-lasting and disruptive.

In your workplace, it is important to speak and listen in a way that is sensitive to the presence of trauma in peoples' lives to avoid re-traumatizing them. We call this trauma-informed communication.

When you communicate in a trauma-informed way, you create a safe, respectful, and empowering workplace.

### Tips for using trauma-informed communication

- Be aware of how the wildfire experience may affect people in different ways.
- Use kind and thoughtful language.
- Don't dismiss the feelings and experiences of others.
- Normalize conversations around mental health and well-being.
- Train your team on how to communicate with respect and kindness.

### Examples of trauma-informed communication

INSTEAD OF	TRY
Just try to stay positive. Other people had it worse. You'll be fine, just give it time. You should be over it by now. Try not to let your personal issues affect your work. Try not to dwell on the past. You need to move on so we can get back to normal.	It's understandable to feel overwhelmed after something like this. Thank you for sharing that with me. I'm here to listen. It's clear that you're handling a lot right now. Take it at your own pace. If there's anything I can do to help make your work feel more manageable, please let me know. We're here for you, however you need.

### Learn more about trauma-informed communication



#### What Does it Mean to be Trauma-Informed?

Psychology Today:  
[www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)



#### We Need Trauma-Informed Workplaces

Harvard Business Review:  
<https://hbr.org>



#### Embracing Trauma-Informed Care in Fire Resiliency Efforts

Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network:  
<https://fireadaptednetwork.org>

## Tips to support newcomers after the wildfire

### ■ Help meet basic needs

- Offer food support such as low-cost staff meals or access to discounted groceries, if possible.
- Share information about food-related services and events such as the Food Bank, Community Fridges, and Community Dinners.
- Share updates about housing in Jasper: [jasper-alberta.ca/p/housing-progress](https://jasper-alberta.ca/p/housing-progress)



### ■ Keep everyone informed

- Communicate often to share recovery updates and information about available services, as well as to address concerns.
- Encourage employees to follow verified sources such as the Municipality of Jasper or Jasper National Park Facebook pages.
- Discourage false information and rumours.
- Warn employees about phone and online scams.

### ■ Reduce social isolation

- Arrange opportunities for employees to connect with each other.
- Encourage employees to volunteer or join local community events.
- Celebrate small wins and recognize employee contributions publicly.
- For more information about mental health and available services, see the Jasper Employer Toolkit (pages 36 to 38).

### ■ Nurture positive workplace culture

- Plan low-cost wellness or team-building activities such as potlucks, movie nights, or nature walks.
- Act quickly if there is tension or conflict between employees.
- Learn about “lateral violence” – when people take stress out on their co-workers. Be aware of this behaviour and take steps to address it.

### ■ Prepare for future emergencies

- Review how your business responded to the wildfire. Update your emergency plans based on what worked and what didn't.
- Have an open conversation with your staff about emergency plans. Ask what would help them feel more prepared.
- For more information about emergency planning, see the Jasper Employer Toolkit (page 43).

### Learn about lateral violence



#### What is the Impact of Lateral Violence?

Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute: <https://ctrinstitute.com>



#### Jasper Employer Toolkit

[jasper-alberta.ca](https://jasper-alberta.ca)



## **A message from Mayor Richard Ireland**

Through every challenge, Jasper's businesses have shown resilience, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to the people who call Jasper home – including the many newcomers who bring fresh perspectives and energy to our workforce.

Though the road to recovery after the wildfire will present its own challenges, it is a road we will walk together. The Jasper Employer Toolkit is one small step toward ensuring that every employer has the support they need to rebuild stronger, while also fostering a welcoming, inclusive environment for new employees.

As we move forward, let us remember the strength, unity, and determination that define our community. Together, we will recover, rebuild, and keep making Jasper a place where businesses, people, and families thrive.