**Traveling the road to recovery**

**Video 6**

**Learning to trust your own thinking and actions**

Emergencies undermine trust and confidence in nature, other people and authorities who normally keep things safe. Trust and confidence are vital to our peace of mind; when aspects of life seem untrustworthy, we respond with worry and anxiety.

It becomes hard to restrict these feelings to the original problems. They generalise to anything connected with them. We can easily feel we don’t know what to trust.

When we lose trust, and become doubtful and uncertain, stress chemicals in our brains prepare us for survival by assuming the worst. We take more notice of information about what threatens us, than what should give us confidence. We often ignore or distrust information that should reassure us.

Stress chemicals simplify our minds and make it hard to see how complicated the situation might be. This helps when we are under threat, but keeps us on edge and prevents us rebuilding confidence in the new future.

This applies to our view of nature, authorities, experts, neighbours and perhaps ourselves. We might simplify the weather threat and think that any hot or windy day is dangerous, whereas there is a combination of factors that make it out of the ordinary.

With ourselves, we’re more likely to remember what we didn’t do, and ignore what we did do and the reasons why and what we’ve learned as a result and would do next time.

In recovering from emergencies, research shows that those who only focus on fixing problems are at a disadvantage because many problems are beyond our control. Frustration and worry then make us more stressed.

But the same research shows when we focus on how we feel and our overall state of mind, we often do better because we’re dealing with something we can influence.

As we approach the summer season, we can all make a difference to how summer affects us:

* Make sure you take in all the information, and notice what’s being done to make situations safer, not just problems and threats.
* If trust and confidence has been undermined, ask what you can trust.
* Notice how you feel, and work to keep a balanced state of mind so you can use all the information available.
* Manage your mood and feelings by talking to others, seeking information, and contacting people who help keep our community safe.
* Set up networks of friends and neighbours to help each other in crisis, and know what supports you can call on.
* Be active, plan and practice what you would do in a crisis, so you can trust your own thinking and actions.

Whatever happened last summer, the best preparation is to have been through it and know what can happen.