

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Tackling Tough Times

**Professor Beverley Raphael and Dr Mel Taylor from the Disaster Response and Resilience Research Group are investigating the effects of the Global Financial Crisis and other major challenges on the mental wellbeing of families and children. This project is funded by the NSW Department of Health.**

'There is evidence that social disadvantage, poverty and lack of access to resources may be associated with increased vulnerability to mental health problems,' says Professor Raphael. 'Research has not yet established the effects of such disadvantages on family life, particularly for those with children, or for those in the potentially most adversely affected communities, including the western suburbs of Sydney. The stresses of these constraints may have a close link to mental health outcomes for families across Sydney.'

This research will be done through surveys (building on the NSW Health Adult Population Health Survey) to identify vulnerable families and their experiences during the Global Financial Crisis. Families will then be recruited and asked to participate in a follow-up study. The researchers will identify options and resources available that might be helpful for their families. The families will be asked to report to researchers about how they are dealing with stressors, such as financial and other pressures they may have been facing and what has been effective for them. These may include programs for education, health or community involvement. The resources and programs will then be evaluated in terms of their utility and adaptations into the families.



The benefits of this research will be in improving health professional's ability to identify strategies and coping mechanisms that families can use during particularly stressful times in their lives. A stronger sense of mental health can provide social and economic benefits for families and children across Western Sydney and New South Wales.

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