



Talking to Your Children After a Traumatic Event

After a traumatic event, parents and caregivers often ask what they can do to reassure children and help them feel safe, and the way we respond will help them through difficult times and provide them with coping skills for further challenges. Here are a few tips for supporting children during these challenging times.



Offer extra hugs. During stressful times, a hug provides extra comfort and reassurance. It helps you, too!

Maintain your routines and schedule. Structure and reliable routines help provide comfort to your child in times of stress.

Be mindful of your environment. Be aware of what children are hearing and seeing. Try to limit exposure to the news and talk with your child about what they are seeing and hearing.

Be honest, truthful, and factual. Answer your child's questions, but don't overwhelm them with too much information.

Provide hope and reassurance. Let your child know he's not alone and that you will get through this together.

Help your child express her worries and fears. It is normal for your child to experience a wide range of emotions, and she may even experience behavior changes during and following stressful events. Talk with your child about what you are seeing and share your concerns.



Support physical activity. Your child needs creative outlets to express his feelings. Dancing, singing, drawing, or writing are helpful ways for your child to express himself. These types of activities also reduce stress.

Express unconditional love. Your child will follow your lead, so pay close attention to what she tells you or shows you what she needs from you. Together you will get through these stressful times.



RESOURCES:

There are many resources available to help you support your child. Access these or professionals if you are in need of more answers.

Talking to Children About Tragedies and Other News Events, American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Talking-To-Children-About-Tragedies-and-Other-News-Events.aspx>

Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event, Child Mind Institute

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/>

Talking to Children About Racial Bias, American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/Talking-to-Children-About-Racial-Bias.aspx>

What Is Race? Having the Conversation with Young Children, PBS Kids for Parents

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/what-is-race-having-the-conversation-with-young-children>