



Assisting Children in the Aftermath of a Tragedy

How to Help a Child Cope

- Do not be critical of the child's reaction but rather listen to them.
- Be available to provide extra attention.
- Let them express their emotions.
- Be watchful of their actions and reactions.
- Don't give too much information to younger children.
- Use age appropriate words and concepts.
- Don't restrict too much information from older children.
- Use empathy by sharing your personal feelings and by being open and honest.
- Reassure their safety.
- Keep to a routine.
- Don't forget to take care of yourself.
- Know when to reach out for additional support.

Trauma

"Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event," the American Psychological Association explains. The effects of trauma may be both physical and mental as the body reacts to the serious injury or threat.

Types of Traumatic Events

- Natural disasters
- Domestic violence
- School violence
- Terminal illness
- Death of a loved one
- Automobile accidents
- Child abuse
- Victim of a crime

Common Childhood Reactions

Preschool children (ages 1-5)

- Thumb sucking
- Bed wetting
- Fear of the dark
- Clinging to parent or caregiver

Childhood (ages 6-11)

- Nightmares
- Feelings of guilt
- Isolation or displays of attention-seeking behavior

Early Adolescence (ages 12-14)

- Difficulty in school
- Increased aggression
- Depression

Adolescence

- Anxiety
- Substance use/abuse
- Fear of personal harm
- Desire for revenge



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firefighterwife.com or email firefamilysupport@frhealth.com.