

## Supporting Youth After a Tragedy/Crisis: Guidance for Parents

In the aftermath of a tragedy or crisis, children may experience a range of emotions and reactions that require sensitive and supportive guidance from parents and caregivers. As trusted sources of comfort and stability, parents and caregivers play a crucial role in helping children navigate through difficult times. Children react to tragedies and crises in various ways depending on their age, personality, and previous experiences. Common reactions may include fear, anxiety, confusion, sadness, anger, and behavioral changes. It's essential for parents to recognize and validate these emotions while providing reassurance and support.

### **Guidance for Parents**

- **Open Communication:** Encourage open and honest communication with children, allowing them to express their thoughts, feelings, and questions. Provide age-appropriate information about the tragedy or crisis, using simple and honest language that children can understand.
- **Reassurance and Safety:** Reassure children that they are safe and loved, emphasizing the protective measures in place to ensure their well-being. Maintain regular routines and familiar activities to provide a sense of stability and security for children during uncertain times.
- **Active Listening and Validation:** Listen actively to children's concerns and validate their feelings without judgment or criticism. Offer comfort and empathy, acknowledging the impact of the tragedy or crisis on their emotions and well-being.
- **Limit Media Exposure:** Limit children's exposure to media coverage of the tragedy or crisis, as repeated exposure can increase distress and anxiety. Monitor children's online activities and provide guidance on accessing reliable and age-appropriate information.
- **Healthy Coping Strategies:** Encourage healthy coping strategies such as talking about feelings, engaging in physical activities, practicing relaxation techniques, and expressing creativity through art or writing. Model self-care behaviors for children, demonstrating the importance of managing stress and prioritizing mental health.

### **Web Resources for Parents**

- [Disasters | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network \(nctsn.org\)](#)- Provides resources and tips for parents on supporting children after traumatic events.
- [Emotional Wellness - HealthyChildren.org](#) - Offers guidance for parents on talking to children about tragedies and coping with traumatic events
- [Multilingual Trauma Resources - Child Mind Institute](#) - Provides articles, videos, and guides for parents on helping children cope with traumatic experiences and building resilience
- [Trauma | ZERO TO THREE](#) - Offers resources and tips for parents on supporting infants and toddlers through challenging times and promoting their emotional well-being
- [National Association of School Psychologists](#) - Provides resources and handouts for parents on supporting children's mental health and well-being after traumatic events.
- [Red Cross: Building Resilience in Children Through Coping Skills](#)- Provides resources to support overall resilience, which can improve children's ability to recover after a stressful situation.

By offering guidance to parents on open communication, reassurance, active listening, limiting media exposure, and promoting healthy coping strategies, school districts can support children's emotional well-being and resilience in the aftermath of a tragedy or crisis. These resources can help inform and empower parents with knowledge and tools to effectively support their children during difficult times.