

Helping young trauma *survivors*

Most children affected by tragedy, whether directly or vicariously, recover within a few weeks, although some need help for longer periods of time. Grief and other emotions may take months or years to resolve and may be re-experienced or worsened by news reports or the event's anniversary.

Some children may need help from a mental health professional, while others may turn to religious leaders, community leaders, teachers, other adults and friends for assistance.

The first step in helping those affected by trauma is to identify those who need assistance. The following may be signs that a child has been affected by trauma or a violent act:

- The child refuses to go places that remind them of the event
- The child seems emotionally numb
- The child shows little reaction to the event
- The child starts to behave dangerously or erratically

To help children cope with trauma, adults should:

- Attend to children
- Listen to what children say
- Accept/do not argue about their feelings
- Help them cope with the reality of their experiences
- Reduce effects of other potential sources of stress in their life
- Monitor the healing process over time
- Immediately address severe reactions to the experience
- Attend to sudden changes in behaviors, speech, language use, and emotions
- Remind children that adults love and support them



If your child has been exposed to trauma and appears to be struggling, don't wait to seek help.

Your Employee Assistance Program is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and offers free, confidential family and individual counseling, along with tools and resources to aid recovery.



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