



# 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



**We're here when you need us.**

Contact the EAP with 24/7 Access

DEAEAP.com

**800.275.7460**

*This content is provided as a support resource and is not intended to replace recommendations from a physician or licensed mental health professional. Dial 911 for life threatening events.*