

HELPING CHILDREN AND TEENS COPE WITH TRAUMA



1. Be direct, simple, honest and appropriate. Explain truthfully what happened.
2. Listen to what the child or teen is feeling or asking you. Then respond according to the child or teen's needs and your own ability.
3. Encourage the child or teen to express feelings openly. Crying is normal and helpful. So are feelings of anger.
4. Accept the emotions and reactions the child or teen expresses. Don't tell the child or teen how she or he should or should not feel.
5. Share your feelings with the child or teen. Allow the child or teen to comfort you.
6. Offer warmth and your physical presence and affections.
7. Be patient. Know that children or teens need to hear and/or tell "the story" and to ask the same questions again and again.
8. Reassure the child or teen that the loss is not contagious; that the death of one person does not mean that another loved one will also die or be injured.
9. Maintain order, stability and security in the child or teen's life.
10. Take your own advice. Take care of yourself. If you're not okay, the child or teen cannot be okay.
11. Many counselors can assist in working through feelings.

TIPS FOR STUDENTS



You have been through something very unexpected, violent and scary. Lots of other students are feeling what you are feeling. Everything you are feeling right now is **NORMAL!** Over time, your feelings will calm down and you will feel better. Here is some information that will help:

1. Don't be afraid of your feelings. If you feel like crying, go ahead. Crying will help you to feel better, because it lets go of stress.
2. Everyone has different feelings at different times. Accept your own feelings and those of others.
3. If you feel sad or angry a lot, or if you feel numb, talk about it with a friend, a teacher, a parent or a counselor.
4. If you are afraid, nervous or spaced out, don't worry---that's normal.
5. You might have nightmares or think about bad things a lot. Try to talk it out with someone. Other ways you can work out your feelings are to write, draw, play music, hike, run, or bike.
6. The grown ups around you have a lot of feelings about what happened, too. Be patient. They are doing the best they can.
7. If you're jumpy or bad-tempered, know that this will go away.
8. Don't pressure yourself or others to "get it together". Everyone heals in their own way. It takes time.
9. Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel like you need help with your feelings, ask your parent or teacher to arrange for a counselor to help.
10. When you feel you are ready, try to go back to some of the activities you enjoyed before.

