

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN COPE WITH TRAUMA

1. Be patient with your child. Every child has a different timetable for recovering. Be reassuring of your child's feelings or thoughts rather than encouraging them to "move on."
2. Continue to explain to your child that they are not responsible for what happened. They may blame themselves even if what happened was out of his or her control.
3. Take extra measures to confirm to your child that he or she is safe at home as well as at school. Have a conversation with your child about safety and coming up with a plan to make them feel safer at home and school.
4. Maintain a routine at home and school as consistency is a great tool for a child to feel safe. Make sure the child continues to go to school.
5. Learn about common reactions that children have to traumatic events.
6. Provide accurate and concrete answers to your child's question. Children often cannot process information that is not straight forward.
7. Pay attention to your feelings and trauma history, reflecting on how this influences how you react to your child.
8. Consult a qualified mental health professional if you child continues to have distress for several weeks. It may be helpful to talk to your primary care physical or school for a referral to a mental health provider that has experience working with children and traumatic events.
9. Allow your child to process what happened through play. This is a very normal part of a child making sense out of what happened.
10. Consider what areas of support you can reach out to including community support, friends and family as well as spiritual beliefs. These particular areas can aid in the process of healing.
11. Take care of yourself by finding someone you can talk to, as you are better able to take care of your child when you take care of yourself.

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