

HELPING YOUR CHILD AFTER A CRISIS

Children may be upset, scared and/or confused after a crisis. These reactions are normal. Listed below are some problems you may see in your child.

Your child may experience:

- Fear of: darkness, strangers, separation from parents, being alone.
- Increase in immature behaviours.
- Not wanting to go to school.
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping behaviours.
- Increase in either aggressive behaviour or shyness.
- Bed wetting or thumb sucking.
- Persistent nightmares.
- Headaches or other physical complaints.

How to help your child:

- Remain calm and controlled - avoid hysteria. Children respond to how the adults in their life conduct themselves.
- Let children know that it's okay to be sad and upset - encourage children to talk about their feelings.
- Reassure children that they are safe. Point out things that ensure their immediate safety.
- Observe children's emotional and behavioural states. Look for changes in mood, appetite and sleep patterns.
- Tell children the truth - don't pretend things didn't happen. Children are smart and will figure it out. Keep explanations age appropriate.
- Limit TV and movies that may remind a child of the event.
- Maintain a normal routine as much as possible.
- Make time to keep talking to children - check up on them.
- Stay close - don't leave for extended periods of time.
- Make sure they get sleep, proper nutrition and lots of activity.
- Reaffirm relationships - love and care from family is a primary need.
- Express that the future is hopeful - help rebuild trust and faith in our own future and the world's.