

Helping Children Cope After a Crisis or Emergency

Adults need to support children after they have experienced unexpected events. Here are some helpful hints:

- Give plenty of hugs.
- Provide safe ways for children to express their feelings, such as drawing or telling stories.
- Listen carefully to what your children are talking about. Acknowledge their feelings. Give them the words to describe how they feel such as,



"It sounds like you're feeling 'scared,' 'unsure about what's going to happen next,' 'sad,' 'angry.' Labeling feelings will help you and the children.

- Answer children's questions as simply and clearly as possible such as, "Yes, _____ did happen. Some things may look different now, but there are some things that are the same." Help children name those things. Remind them, "We are safe and trying to make things better."
- Remember to be calm and understanding when children are being clingy, whiny, or over active. Helping them regain control of their feelings reassures them that you are keeping them safe.
- Keep routines as familiar as possible.
- Minimize children's exposure to media coverage.



Support for Parents: Remember to take care of yourself during stressful times. While it's important for children to share their feelings and have a daily routine, parents can also benefit from this same advice! It may be helpful for you to share your feelings and concerns with other adults or establish a daily routine in the present circumstance. Taking good care of yourself is another important way that you are helping to take care of your children.