



Reactions of Children Ages 6 to 11 to Disaster & Tragedy

Produced by FEI Behavioral Health

The information below identifies the most frequently occurring reactions of children in response to a disaster or tragedy.

As with the early childhood group, regressive behaviors appear, such as those previously noted, some of them marked in degree. Additional behaviors or concerns include:

- Irritability
- Disobedience
- Depression
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Visual or hearing problems

School problems may begin to appear and take the form of:

- Refusal to go to school
- Behavior problems at school
- Poor performance
- Fighting
- Withdrawal of interest
- Loss of ability to concentrate
- Distractibility

Peer problems, such as:

- Withdrawal from playgroups
- Withdrawal from friends
- Withdrawal from previously enjoyed activities
- Refusal to go to the playground or to parties
- Aggressive behavior, such as frequent fights with friends or siblings

When to Seek Professional Help for Your Children

Reactions may appear immediately after the tragedy or disaster or after the passage of days even weeks. Most often they are transient and soon disappear. Many of the above reactions can be diminished by the parents themselves through understanding of the basis for the behaviors and giving extra attention and caring. Reactions generally can be considered “normal” if they occur for a short period during or following the event. When they persist, however, parents should recognize that a more serious emotional concern may be developing and professional help should be sought.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 337-436-9533 or 1-888-414-FYCA.

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