



Supporting Children in the Face of Disaster

Produced by FEI Behavioral Health

Following a disaster it is important to keep the family together as much as possible, and to give children guidance and support to help ease their fears. These fears often include that:

- the event will happen again
 - someone will be hurt or killed
 - they will be separated from their family
 - they will be alone
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- Find out what and how much your children know. Correct any misinformation about the event with actual facts. Explain the facts calmly based on what is appropriate and understandable for their age. If you need help determining what is age appropriate information, check with your child's school.
 - Encourage them to talk about their feelings about the disaster, and to ask questions. They may need to tell and re-tell their story. They may also act out the event. This is normal. It is also normal for children, particularly very young ones, to have little or no reaction to the event.
 - Limit their exposure to the media. Instead, try to increase your interaction with them. Filter what they see, especially any graphic material about the event.
 - If they are questioning safety, reassure them that you and the family are safe, and are working to keep them safe.
 - Assure them that you are there for them, and will continue to be there for them.
 - What you say and do will affect your children's views and ability to cope. Do not convey a sense of hopelessness or helplessness.
 - Continue their activities, routines and chores. There is a sense of safety and predictability that is established by having a routine.
 - Avoid isolation. A sense of community is very important to children, and to all of us, especially at this time.
 - Consider how you and your children can help. Children are better able to regain their sense of power and security if they feel they can contribute something positive and help in some way.
 - Seek professional help for your children should regressive behavior not diminish over time, sleeping problems continue for more than a few weeks, or if their fears and anxieties intensify.

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

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