

After a Crisis

Common reactions:

- Irritability
- Discuss events over and over
- Sleeping more or less
- Increased emotions
- Increased anxiety or worrying
- Changes in behavior
- Have a hard time concentrating
- Changes in appetite
- Regression of behaviors, (bedwetting, clinging to parent, thumb sucking)
- Withdrawal from previous activities or people

How families can support their child(ren) after a crisis at home

Everyone responds differently to a crisis...you, your child and children may all have different responses to trauma. Different emotions, such as, crying, anger or nervous laughter, are all acceptable ways to react. Children often will be sad one minute and off playing the next. They often bring up the event at times that are unexpected, such as, the grocery store, in the car or right before drop off at a friend's house.

Talk to your child... Allow your child to talk about the event. Sharing the vent over and over can support their recovery. Take their lead on how much they are talking about or saying. Remind them they are safe and be reassuring.

Children need to feel safe/ Spend time together... taking time to spend together as family can support recovery. Being together can help children feel safe and connected. Provide extra affection and reassurance.

Reduce exposure to media... this is especially important for young children(ages, 4-9), even if they are in the next room. Continued exposure to the coverage of an event can create more anxiety, expose them to information they weren't aware of and believe the event is still occurring. This can inhibit their ability to move past the trauma.

Keep structures in place at home... try to maintain similar routines and structures at home. Bedtime, meals and activities as much as possible. Keeping the same family rules can provide comfort in times of crisis. Although, we often feel like lightening up on rules at this time, providing this structure can help children feel safe and secure.

Teaching your child coping strategies and breathing exercises... teaching your child healthy ways to cope with stress is a great way to support your child. Deep breathing, journaling, drawing a picture, listening to music are all ways to support their coping. Children will find comfort in learning how you also handle stress in healthy ways.

Access professional help.... Anxiety and big emotions can last over several months. Seek support right away if your child is having thoughts of suicide or harming themselves, panic attacks, or seeing/hearing things that aren't there. Your school counselor and/ or school mental health provider is at the school to support your family and discuss more ideas of how to assist your child after a trauma.

Resources and Sources:

Colorado Crisis Support line- 1-844-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 38255

Community Reach Center-303-853-3500

School Counseling and mental health team

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/children-with-traumatic-stress.htm>

<http://childmind.org/wp-content/uploads/Child-Mind-Institute-Parents-Guide-Traumatic-Event.pdf>

<http://www.nasponline.org/>

<http://www.nctsn.org/>

http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix_e6_tips_for_parents_with_schoolage_children.pdf