

HELPING CHILDREN AND TEENS COPE WITH TRAUMA



1. Be direct, simple, honest and appropriate. Explain truthfully what happened.
2. Listen to what the child or teen is feeling or asking you. Then respond according to the child or teen's needs and your own ability.
3. Encourage the child or teen to express feelings openly. Crying is normal and helpful. So are feelings of anger.
4. Accept the emotions and reactions the child or teen expresses. Don't tell the child or teen how she or he should or should not feel.
5. Share your feelings with the child or teen. Allow the child or teen to comfort you.
6. Offer warmth and your physical presence and affections.
7. Be patient. Know that children or teens need to hear and/or tell "the story" and to ask the same questions again and again.
8. Reassure the child or teen that the loss is not contagious; that the death of one person does not mean that another loved one will also die or be injured.
9. Maintain order, stability and security in the child or teen's life.
10. Take your own advice. Take care of yourself. If you're not okay, the child or teen cannot be okay.
11. Many counselors can assist in working through feelings.