

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS



1. Encourage discussion of the traumatic event. Be sure that YOU are calm and ready to talk before expecting children or teens to do so. Take deep breaths. Talk with your support system. If you are in crisis, you cannot be effective.
2. Learn the symptoms of trauma and let your child or teen know that what they are experiencing is normal and expected. Tell and show them that they are loved and valued. Be patient.
3. Sleep disturbances are one of the most common symptoms. Nightmares, difficulty falling or staying asleep and fitful sleep are normal reactions.
4. A child or teen may experience regression. If they revert to behaviors from an earlier age, allow it. This will pass over time. Examples are: sleeping with the light on, wanting to be held, sucking their thumb, and wetting the bed.
5. Talk to your child or teen and LISTEN to what they say. Accept and support their feelings, no matter what they are. Do not try to talk them out of how they are feeling. Let them know that all of their feelings are normal.
6. Encourage time with their friends and support systems.
7. Loss of concentration and achievement is a symptom of trauma. Do not expect your child or teen to perform at their usual level for a while.
8. Many counselors can assist you in this difficult time.