



What Can I Do to Help My Child?

You are valuable to your child's healing process. After a traumatic event, you can:

- **Help your child to feel safe, secure, and loved**
- Help your child to **return to typical routines** as much as possible (e.g., sleep, school, being with friends)
- **Talk with your child** about their thoughts and feelings, but don't force your child to talk
- **Be patient and accepting** of your child's reactions, but keep enforcing household rules
- **Reassure your child** that the traumatic event was not their fault
- If concerned, **have your child assessed** by a mental health professional trained in trauma-focused treatment or other trauma-focused services

Additional Resources



Dial 211 for free referral assistance to get information, referrals or help during a crisis.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

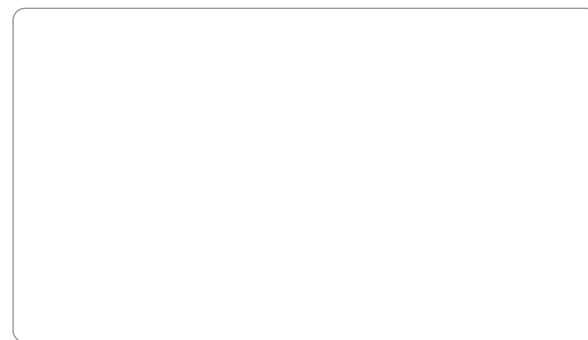
<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/parents-families>

National Alliance on Mental Illness

<https://www.nami.org>



A PROGRAM OF
CHDI Child Health and
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WHAT FAMILIES NEED
TO KNOW ABOUT

Trauma Screening

What Are Potentially Traumatic Events?

Potentially traumatic events are extremely scary or upsetting. For example:



Physical or sexual abuse



Potentially life-threatening accidents or natural disasters



Unexpected death or prolonged separation from a primary caregiver or loved one



Witnessing or experiencing severe violence

Children can also experience other forms of adversity, such as neglect, racism, discrimination, or homelessness.

What are the Effects of Potentially Traumatic Events?

Children respond to traumatic events in many different ways, including:



Trouble sleeping or having nightmares



Behavior problems or aggression



Wanting to be alone or having a hard time being alone



Getting upset when reminded about the traumatic event(s), or not wanting to talk about it



Frequent thoughts about the traumatic event(s)



Difficulty paying attention or focusing on ordinary tasks



Physical problems such as stomach aches, headaches or problems with eating

Most children have some reactions for a short time if they experience potentially traumatic events – this is common and understandable. Many children start to feel better within a few weeks.

However, even with support from family and friends, a child may continue to struggle with trauma reactions, sometimes for many years.

What is a Trauma Screen?



Screening identifies what types of potentially traumatic events a child might have experienced and possible effects on the child. Often, children don't talk about these events or effects unless they are asked. If concerns are identified, families can be offered connections with mental health, community, and other resources.

During the trauma screen, you or your child will be asked about:

- Whether they experienced events that may have been traumatic
- Whether they are experiencing effects related to traumatic events

With support from caregivers and the community, children and families can recover. Without support, recovering from trauma exposure may be more difficult. Screening for traumatic events and potential trauma-related problems can show caregivers how to help their child and decide whether talking to a professional with experience in treating trauma-related problems would be helpful for the family.



What Will Happen After Trauma Screening?

- The results of trauma screening and recommendations will be shared with you and your child.
- If the results suggest your child may be having difficulties because of continuing reactions to traumatic events, you are not alone. There are things you can do, and effective treatments and services that can help.
- If the results suggest that trauma-focused services could help your child, you will receive recommendations for who can provide these services in your community. You can choose how you would like to move forward.
- The people providing trauma-focused services should include you in every step of the way. They should discuss your child's reactions and care with you. They should work with you so that you can help your child and family heal.

