



Supporting Children and Teens who Have Experienced Trauma

What is trauma?

Trauma is a scary or dangerous event, such as abuse, an accident, or violence. For some children and teens, experiencing trauma can lead to long term negative reactions, emotions, and behaviors.

Children or teens who have experienced trauma may:

- Feel fearful, sad, or guilty
- Have trouble falling asleep or have nightmares
- Have trouble focusing in school
- Isolate themselves from family and friends
- Develop headaches or stomachaches (not due to another medical issue)
- Become aggressive or easily angry
- Engage in risky or harmful behaviors
- Use substances like drugs or alcohol

Ways to help:

A caregiver can help their child or teen feel supported by:

- Ensuring the child's future safety to the extent possible
- Maintaining daily structures and routines that help the child feel safe
- Reassuring their child that the traumatic event is not their fault
- Being patient with their child's recovery
- Seeking treatment and mental health resources to support the child in their recovery

Sources: American Psychological Association - <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network - https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources//age_related_reactions_to_traumatic_events.pdf

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - <https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/understanding-child-trauma>

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