



A trauma is a dangerous, frightening, and sometimes violent experience that is often sudden. Trauma is a normal reaction that occurs in response to an extreme event. It can happen to one family member or a whole family. Examples of a trauma are:

- Violence
- Fire
- Homelessness
- Natural Disaster

After experiencing a trauma, children, teenagers and families may feel traumatic stress. Feelings of traumatic stress include:

- Feeling scared or anxious
- Feeling numb

How it affects my child

Many people who go through trauma will have trouble adjusting to life after the event. The brain of children and teenagers may be harmed and they may not develop needed skills. After trauma, some children suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Child Traumatic Stress (CTS) or depression.

PTSD usually happens after a major trauma that was life-threatening. **CTS** happens after trauma is over. It is important to get help for a child or teenager after going through a trauma so they can continue to grow. For more information, refer to the Anxiety Disorder Fact Sheet included in this kit.

Signs & Symptoms

There are lots of reactions to trauma including:

- Thinking about what happened
- Aggression or irritability
- Body aches
- Having trouble at school
- Nightmares or difficulty sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Refusing to go to school

What can we do about it?

It's important to get help if children or teenagers are having signs or symptoms after a trauma. Caregivers and relatives can help children in two important ways:

1. Talking to children about what happened
2. Getting professional help

Recommendations for families

- Learn what trauma is
- Get help from trauma experts
- Be involved in your child's health

What can caregivers say and do?

- Tell children they are safe
- Let children talk about feelings and fears
- Go back to a daily schedule
- Spend extra time with family and friends

Resource Links

Children's Mental Health Matters!

Facts for Families — First Steps in Seeking Help
www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

This site contains resources for families to promote an understanding of mental illnesses.
www.aacap.org

Helping Children after a disaster

Information for parents about trauma, PTSD, and behavioral changes to look for.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Helping-Children-After-A-Disaster-036.aspx

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Defines PTSD and gives symptoms.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Posttraumatic-Stress-Disorder-PTSD-070.aspx

Talking to Children about Terrorism and War

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Talking-To-Children-About-Terrorism-And-War-087.aspx

Talking to Children about the News

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Children-And-The-News-067.aspx

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia – Center for Pediatric Child Traumatic Center

<http://www.chop.edu/cpts>

Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health

<http://www.mdcoalition.org>

National Institute of Mental Health

NIMH strives to transform the understanding and treatment of mental illness through basic clinical research, paving the way for prevention, recovery, and cure. Visit NIMH for information on clinical trial and mental health information, statistics, and resources.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters

Defines trauma, describes how children react to trauma and how to help them, includes tips for parents and caregivers.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-disasters-and-other-traumatic-events/index.shtml>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

NCTSN seeks to improve access to care, treatment, and services for traumatized children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events.

<http://www.nctsn.org>

Aces Too High

<https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/>



Coordinated by



The Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign is a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Maryland Department of Health - Behavioral Health Administration. The Campaign goal, with School and Community Champions across the state, is to raise public awareness of the importance of children's mental health. For more information, please visit www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org