

Adolescents Ages Twelve to Seventeen Years:

- Sleep disturbances, night-mares
- Numbing; showing few emotions
- Avoids reminders of event
- Risk taking behaviors
- Alcohol; substance abuse
- Changes in usual behaviors
- Antisocial behaviors
- Changes in school performance
- Physical complaints (stomach aches, headaches)
- Depression
- Suicidal ideation
- School avoidance



Parents/Adults Need to Help Themselves?

Adults need to help themselves when they are traumatized and engage in self care. If they are also parents, getting support and assistance is important in order to be better able to listen to their children and give them the understanding and support they need to heal.

What adults can do:

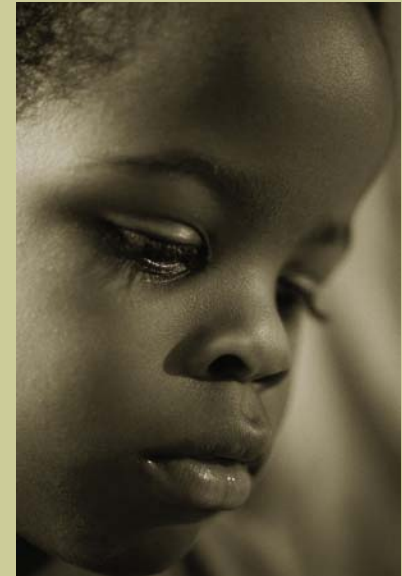
- Return to regular routines
- Spend time with friends
- Seek out support from friends and colleagues
- Keep a journal
- Participate in activities that feel good
- Try to be patient with others also under stress
- Give yourself permission to feel moody or nervous
- Try not to make major life changes under stress
- Make as many daily decisions as possible
- Take control over your life
- Try to rest and eat regular meals

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Helping Children and Families Cope with Hurricanes



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Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress

- Re-experiencing; acting out trauma
- Numbing of emotions
- Avoidance of reminders of hurricane
- Anxiety and hypervigilance
- New fears unrelated to the event
- Not wanting to leave a safe environment or trusted adult
- Interference with normal tasks

How Can Parents and Other Adults Help Traumatized Children

- Indicate you are available to listen
- Use a calm tone of voice
- Reassure children that they will be safe



Younger children might be afraid that something they thought or did caused bad things to happen.

- Don't minimize the child's feelings
- Follow the child's lead
 - If the child wants to talk, listen
 - If the child wants to be held, do so
 - If the child is clingy, be patient
- Allow children to show their fears
- Give support
- Help children identify their feelings

Even if it is difficult for the parent who also may be traumatized, it is important for children to be able to feel safe.

Lack of trust in adults and new fears are common after traumatic events. Parents need to be able to listen to their children and hear their concerns. If parents are traumatized, it is important for them to find support for themselves in order to be able to support their children.

Reactions to trauma are difficult to predict. They may occur immediately after the event or days and even weeks later. The hurricane may remind children (or adults) about earlier traumas and can make the reactions more severe. Children's reactions to the traumatic event will be affected strongly by those of their parents.

Children's reactions vary at different ages. Common reactions of children are listed on the next page. If any of the behaviors or symptoms do not lessen or go away over time, it is important to seek professional help. Interventions can be very helpful for traumatized children and allow them to get back on a normal developmental path.



Outcomes For Children and Adolescents Who Have Experienced a Traumatic Event

Children Ages Five Years and Younger:

- Fear of being separated from parent, clinging
- Crying, whimpering
- Trembling, aimless motion
- Frightened facial expressions
- Returning to behaviors shown at earlier ages like thumb sucking, bedwetting, no longer being toilet trained, fear of darkness

Children Ages Six to Eleven Years:

- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Sadness, depression
- Anxiety, feelings of guilt
- Disruptive behavior, anger, fighting
- Refusal to attend school
- Changes in school performance
- Inability to concentrate
- Changes in usual
- Nightmares & other sleep problems
- Physical complaints (stomachaches, headaches)
- Showing little emotion; numbing