

c&fs EAP

Employee Assistance Program

Helping your children in the aftermath of collective trauma

Make sure you take care of yourself—refer to “How to take care of self & others”

- Be kind to yourself and others—assume people are doing their best to figure out how to cope with the traumatic event
- Be mindful of your own response and that children will observe it—you may need to prioritize taking care of yourself so that you can be there for others

Communication

- Regularly check in with children about what they have heard, and how they’re reacting and feeling about the event
- Age-appropriate language—simple, clear, and sensitive; stick to facts, limit information to avoid overwhelming children
- It’s OK to say you don’t know why it happened— emphasize positive behaviors of those helping to keep everyone safe
- Ask children their understanding of the event and clarify misunderstandings—don’t assume what your child is thinking
- Respond empathetically, avoid judgment; validate emotions
- Talk to your child about any safety concerns and develop ideas to make them feel safer
- Encourage them to talk to and find support from others who share their identities or who they are comfortable with

Day-to-day

- Maintain routines, structures, and rules as much as possible
- PRN: pause, reset, nourish; encourage healthy eating and adequate rest
- Encourage activities to help disengage from what happened—encourage them to play and laugh
- Limit exposure to TV, online images and reporting on what happened

Distress in children

- If distress persists, seek professional help

This information was compiled and modified from the following sources:

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress ; National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Sulaski, C. (Reviewed 2019). Individual's reactions to traumatic events. Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2014, November). Tips for survivors: Coping with grief after community violence (Pub. No. SMA-14-4888). Retrieved August 22, 2019, from [h2ps://store.samhsa.gov](https://store.samhsa.gov)

U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (1993, December). Helping an employee recover from an assault (Chapter 5). In *A Manager's Handbook: Handling Traumatic Events (OWR-15)*. Retrieved January 11, 2019, from [h.ps://www.opm.gov](https://www.opm.gov)

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