

Let's talk about...

U.S. News
"Best Children's
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Supporting Your Child After a Trauma

A trauma is a shocking event or situation that causes distress or emotional upset. This kind of event can interrupt a child's everyday life.

Some tips to keep in mind:

- Use simple, direct, and honest words to talk with your child about the event.
- Provide opportunities for play to help your child process feelings and express emotions.
- Use children's books to help your child talk to you about the event.
- Continue your child's routine as much as possible. Children feel safer when things are expected.
- A child may feel guilty for the event, like it was somehow their fault. Try to not blame them and let your child know they can safely talk about what happened.
- Ask questions that will encourage expression and create a discussion about the event.
- Look for additional support for your child if post-trauma symptoms continue and are concerning to you (see below).

Symptoms you may notice:

Typical responses may be:

- Not able to verbalize a clear understanding of what is happening



- Quickly engage in play during and/or after difficult conversations
- Repeat the same questions and concerns
- Wanting to do the same routines and ask to do things they would normally do

Behaviors that may show a need for more support:

- Extreme state of anger, fear, and panic
- Negative view of self, the world, and who they are in the world
- Behaving in a way that is different from normal, like taking more risks
- Appetite changes (over or under eating)
- Low energy
- Not showing much emotion and wanting to be alone
- Sleep challenges (trouble falling asleep or sleeping for extremely long periods)
- Frequent acting out behaviors
- Increased fears about the health and safety of others

For more information or to connect with a Child Life Specialist, please visit: <http://ucdavis.health/childlife>