

==== AFTER VIOLENCE ====

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WHO HAVE FACED TRAUMA

INFANTS AND TODDLERS, **0-2 YEARS OLD,**

cannot understand that a trauma is happening, but they know when their caregiver is upset. They may start to show the same emotions as their caregivers, or they may act differently, like crying for no reason, withdrawing from people, and not playing with their toys.



CHILDREN, **3-5 YEARS OLD,**

can understand the effects of trauma. They may have trouble adjusting to change and loss. They may depend on the adults around them to help them feel better.



WHAT STRESS MAY LOOK LIKE AND HOW TO RESPOND

Age Group/Behaviors

Crying more than usual

More clinginess

Difficulty sleeping or
sleeping more than usual

Changes in eating or
bowel movements

INFANTS

What You Can Do

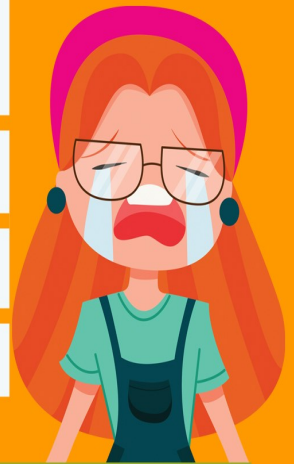
Keep routines in care
normal and consistent

Hold and rock more, be
affectionate

Keep a positive attitude

Reassure as needed

Be patient



Loss of appetite

May regress to acting
younger, for example,
wanting a bottle AND
using "baby talk"

Clinginess

Cries or screams a lot

Being more aggressive
hitting or pushing

TODDLERS

Play with them

Continue to hug and
give affection

Pay attention to
how they play



SUPPORTING CHILDREN



Keep routines normal

and continue favorite rituals or activities

Maintain a **"peaceful"** atmosphere

Make sure children are eating **regular, healthy meals**

Always **reassure children** that you will do whatever you can to keep them safe

Limit exposure to the media

and adult conversations about the disaster

Answer any questions

children have. Be honest without giving a lot of detail

Talk about the event

when children bring it up - don't try to change the subject. Correct any "false" ideas young children may have about what happened. The language you use and information you give should always be age-appropriate.

Help children feel in control by

allowing them to have choices. Choices give them a voice and allow them to be responsible for their actions or decisions. Ex: Giving a 4 yr. old a choice of playing with blocks or an art activity.

Teach children ways to calm themselves

like dancing to music, breathing deeply, or doing art activities.

Give opportunities for emotional expression

through activities like playing with Playdough, drawing, building, and dramatic play.

