



Healing Through Resilience and Community

If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts **call** 1-800-273-8255 or **text** 741741

Overview

A traumatic event is a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience that affects someone emotionally. Every person responds to crisis and trauma differently. Knowing how to help yourself and your child work through a traumatic event can be difficult, but is important in the path to healing.

Responses to Trauma

Experiencing emotional and physical reactions after a traumatic event is **normal**. People at risk for secondary trauma include friends, family, and acquaintances of the victim/s. Individual responses to trauma vary and can last anywhere from a few days to a few months.

Normal responses to trauma:

- Feeling anxious, sad or angry
- Trouble concentrating and sleeping
- Continually thinking about what happened
- Feelings of fear, grief, and depression
- Feeling responsible and self-blame

Physical responses to trauma:

- Headaches
- Feeling tired
- Stomach pain
- Digestive issues
- Racing heart or palpitations
- Chills and sweating
- Being jumpy and easily startled

Signs someone may need help:

- Worrying, anxiety, sadness, fear, or anger
- Unable to think clearly
- Reliving the experience
- Crying, nightmares, and difficulty sleeping
- Avoiding places/people
- Withdrawing from activities
- Using drugs and/or alcohol as a coping mechanism

Source: National Institute of Mental Health. (2017). Coping with Traumatic Events. Retrieved July 13, 2017 from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

How to Begin the Healing Process

Recognizing your feelings and understand that they are a normal reaction to an abnormal situation is the first step to healing. **Talk about your experience**; reach out to friends and family for support, and connect with your community. Take one day at a time and **be kind** to yourself. **Exercise and meditation** are excellent ways to balance the thoughts and feelings you may be having. **Structure your time** and schedule breaks for yourself. **Focus your energy** on your priorities and get involved with activities that are personally meaningful.

Helping Family, Friends, and Your Community

Talk. Listen. Empathize. Offer support. Give time. Give space.

Show appreciation. Give hugs. Offer praise. Use rituals.

Reaffirm family bonds. Validate each other.

Visit coronadosafe.org for more resources and information

Coronado SAFE (Student And Family Enrichment)
1009 C Avenue | 619-522-6884 | www.CoronadoSAFE.org

Healing as a Family

Traumatic events can leave us with a range of responses. As adults, it can be difficult to understand and acknowledge our own feelings and emotions, so imagine how confusing it is for our kids. Prioritizing healing as a family activity will provide a foundation of support for both you and your children.

5 Ways to Talk to Your Child After a Crisis

Find out what your child knows about the event. Their perception of what happened may be very different from reality.

Admit to your own feelings. Reassure your child that it is ok to talk about what they are feeling and ask questions.

Reassure your child that he/she is safe. Let him/her know that even though bad things happen, the world has many good people who want to help.

Get close. Physical attention such as hugs or snuggling provides an inner feeling of calm and safety.

When sharing information, be honest in an age-appropriate way.

Talking to Your Kids About Suicide

Every parent would like to believe that suicide is not relevant to them, their family, or friends. Unfortunately, it's all too relevant for all of us. **Creating a dialogue** with your child about suicide will **establish a line of communication** about a topic that is often kept secret. Secrets that are openly communicated become less powerful and less scary, and **will give your child permission to approach you** about the subject in the future. Things to consider before starting the conversation...

Acknowledge that suicide is as much of a risk for your child as not wearing a seatbelt.

Talk to your child about suicide as you would talk to them about drugs and alcohol.

Approach suicide the same way as you would other subjects that are important to you.

How Do I Talk to My Child?

- Pick a time when you have the best chance of getting your child's attention
- Think about what you want to say ahead of time and rehearse a script if necessary
- Suicide is a hard subject to talk about - admit it! Acknowledging your discomfort gives your child permission to acknowledge his/her's, too
- Ask for your child's response and be direct; ask "what are your thoughts about suicide?"
- Listen to what your child has to say and be honest about your concerns
- Ask about any problems that your child may be having and how they feel about them
- Do not over- or under- react. You want to establish trust so that you can have continuing open dialogue about these issues

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