

Ways to Help Your Child and Help Yourself At the Same Time

Understand

1. Trauma is like no other experience. It brings out reactions you may have never seen before, nor your child has ever experienced.
2. Your child may not have control over his behavior because the terror he experienced has left him feeling out of control. It may be that terror which is driving his behaviors.
3. As long as a child's behavior is not hurting others or himself, it is okay.
4. If your child's behavior is upsetting to you, it is best to talk with a trauma specialist before reacting because these behaviors need special intervention.

Be Patient

1. Trauma destroys a child's sense of safety and security. They will need time to feel again and to feel you can protect them.
2. As a parent of a traumatized child, it will be very difficult to see your child return to behaviors he engaged in years earlier, to see them act entirely different than the child you knew them to be before the trauma. They need you to be patient.
3. Whatever behaviors they turn to after their trauma, no matter how strange or frightening they are for you, it is your child's attempt to feel powerful and safe again. be patient. Do not push them to change or to stop until you have consulted a trauma specialist.

Be Nurturing

1. Whatever the age, any trauma needs to be followed by a lot of nurturing.
2. Let your child eat what he/she wants, follow you around or even withdraw for a while. Your child may want to be taken care of, to have fewer demands.
3. Spend more time with your child the first several weeks.

Keep it Simple

1. A terrorized child, adolescent, or adult will find it difficult to concentrate and remember even the simplest of things.
2. A terrorized individual will be forgetful. He can even forget what he was doing or talking about five minutes earlier.
3. You need to simplify everything for several weeks. Do not expect more. Do not introduce new challenges. This is a time to protect your child from stress. It really needs to be an "all the cookies and milk I want" time for traumatized children.

Normalize

1. Reinforce that you understand that his reactions are not unusual following his experience.
2. Learn what trauma reactions can be expected and let your child know what he may yet experience.