

3. Parents should be prepared to tolerate regressive behaviours and accept the manifestation of aggression and anger, especially in the early phases after the tragedy.

4. Parents should be prepared for children to talk sporadically about the event - spending small segments of time concentrating on particular aspects of the tragedy.

5. Children want as much factual information as possible and should be allowed to discuss their own theories about what happened in order for them to begin to master the trauma or to reassert control over their environment.

6. Since children are often reluctant to initiate conversations about trauma, it may be helpful to ask them what they think other children felt or thought about the event.

7. Reaffirming the future and talking in "hopeful" terms about future events can help a child rebuild trust and faith in their own future, and in the world around them. Often parental despair interferes with a child's ability to recover.

## Information Resources

Kid's Help Phone Tel:1-800-668-6868

North of Superior Programs  
Marathon Tel:(807)229-0607  
Manitouwadge Tel:(807)826-4517

The Children's Centre Tel: (807) 343-5000  
Marathon Tel: (807) 229-1712

Superior North Victim Services has a range of books and videos that may be borrowed to help children deal with the trauma they have experienced: such as abuse and death. We can help you find the resources you need to help your children thrive.

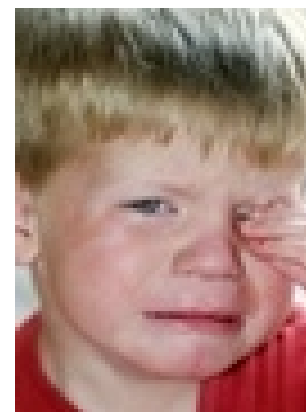


Phone: (807)229-8877 or  
(807)826-4171  
Fax: (807)229-8894  
Email: [info@snvs.ca](mailto:info@snvs.ca)  
Website: [www.snvs.ca](http://www.snvs.ca)



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# Children and Trauma



While trauma can be hard for adults to cope with, it can be especially difficult for children. Children's reactions to trauma will involve not only the impact of the catastrophe on their lives (what they saw, heard, felt, smelled and so on) but also a **sense of crisis over their parents' reaction(s)**.

## Children's Reactions

Depending on the age and developmental stage, each child will react to the trauma they've experienced in their own way.

It is not uncommon for children to display a wide range of physical and/or emotional reactions after experiencing a sudden disturbing event. Some reactions may occur suddenly, while others may occur more slowly over a period of time.

### Your Child May Feel:

- \* **Frightened** - that the same thing will happen again. If someone close to them has died, they may fear that they will lose someone else as well.
- \* **Afraid** - to be alone, to go to sleep at night: they may become afraid of loud noises, storms or unfamiliar people.
- \* **Helpless** - something really bad happened and they were unable to do anything to stop it or prevent it.

- \* **Angry** - they may be really mad about what has happened; angry at whoever was responsible or that nobody did anything to stop or prevent it.
- \* **Guilty** - they may feel guilty that they survived when somebody else died; guilty thinking that they should have done something to prevent it; that it was in some way their fault.
- \* **Sad** - if someone was injured or killed, especially if it was someone they knew or were very close to.

In addition to these feelings you may notice your child experiencing:

- \* Difficulty sleeping
- \* Bad dreams and nightmares
- \* Become clingy, whine more, not willing to let you out of their sight
- \* Stomach aches, headaches, nausea, vomiting
- \* Become quiet and withdrawn, not wanting to talk about the experience
- \* Revert to previous bad habits such as thumbsucking, wanting a bottle or soother (younger children)
- \* Bedwetting

- \* Acting out - becoming more aggressive with siblings, throwing or breaking things
- \* Being more worried or restless
- \* Not wanting to go to school or do some of the things they did before

## Some Coping Strategies For Children

1. Rebuild and reaffirm attachments and relationships. Love and care in the family is a primary need. Extra time should be spent with children to let them know that someone will take care of them and, if parents are survivors, that their parents have reassumed their former role as protector and nurturer is important. Physical closeness is needed.
2. It is important to talk to children about the tragedy - to address the irrational suddenness of disaster. Children need to be allowed to ventilate their feelings, as do adults, and they have a similar need to have those feelings validated. It may be useful to provide them with special time to paint, draw or write about the event.