

Helpful Information for Parents and Students following a Traumatic Event

Traumatic events are situations that may be sudden or unexpected, involve a shocking nature of events, and produce feelings of horror, terror, or helplessness.ⁱ Some examples of traumatic events may include:

- Physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Witnessing or being the direct victim of interpersonal violence (domestic, dating violence)
- Witnessing or being the direct victim of community violence (gang violence, riots, school shootings)
- Severe motor vehicle and other accidents
- Medical trauma including severe injury or life threatening illness
- Natural and human-made disasters
- Sudden death of a loved one or peer
- Exposure to war terrorism or refugee conditionsⁱⁱ

Research has shown that adolescents who encounter a traumatic event may experience social, emotional and even academic consequences as a result of the traumatic event. Adolescents experiencing a traumatic event may be more prone to engage in risky behaviors, less likely to make realistic evaluations of danger and safety, and may experience symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).ⁱⁱⁱ Children and youth may demonstrate one or many of the following post-traumatic responses:

- Anxiety and/or Anger
- Suicidal Thoughts or Feelings
- Depression
- Substance Abuse
- Fear
- Frequent mood changes
- Truancy
- Fighting
- Impaired concentration and problem solving abilities
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Difficulty communicating
- Poor school performance

Safe2Tell Can Help

The goal of Safe2Tell is to intervene at the earliest possible point in the life of a young person who is struggling, helping them when they need it before the situation turns into a tragedy. Safe2Tell serves as the statewide bystander reporting tool for concerns in Colorado. The Safe2Tell solution was developed specifically to encourage those with information about a possible event or dangerous situation to report it in a way that keeps the reporter safe from retaliation or fear.

If you witness a child or youth who has experienced a traumatic event and is engaging in risky or harmful behavior, you can make an anonymous Safe2Tell report alerting a team of caring committed adults of the situation. Safe2Tell reports create interventions for youth and children who are struggling and provides the accountability and follow-up required to ensure action is taken on every concerned received.



To make a safe, anonymous report to Safe2Tell:

Call 1-877-542-7233

to make a report to a live, trained dispatcher 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

or

Visit www.safe2tell.org

to submit a report online.

Additional Resources:

If YOU are struggling and need someone to talk to, you can call the statewide Colorado Crisis and Support Line at 844-493-TALK (8255).

For information on how to assist youth struggling after a traumatic event, please visit one of our partners for action plans, additional resources and information:

- Colorado Mental Health First Aid: <http://www.mhfaco.org/>
- Sandy Hook Columbine Cooperative: <http://sandyhookcolumbine.org/>
- Center for Study and Prevention of Violence: <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://www.sprc.org/>
- Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners (formerly Metro Crisis Services): <http://www.metrocrisiservices.org/>
- Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault: www.ccasa.org

U.S. Department of Education Tips for Helping Students Recovering from Traumatic Events:

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/recovering/recovering.pdf>

ⁱ Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger, *Treating Trauma and Traumatic Grief in Children and Adolescents*, The Guilford Press, 2006, p.3.

ⁱⁱ National Child Traumatic Stress Network: *Understanding Traumatic Street in Adolescents: A Primer for Substance Abuse Professionals*, June 2008, p. 1

ⁱⁱⁱ National Child Traumatic Stress Network: *Understanding Traumatic Street in Adolescents: A Primer for Substance Abuse Professionals*, June 2008, p. 4