

underlying health conditions that place them at a higher risk

- Children and teens
- First Responders
- Individuals with mental health conditions and/or substance abuse issues

Children respond to stress differently

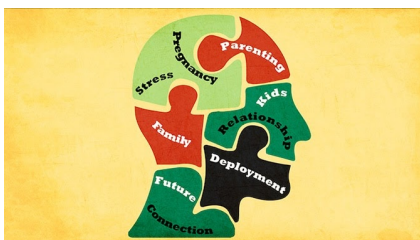
Some children may become upset or show strong emotions directly after an event or emergency. Others may show signs of distress much later. Some children may also have more severe, and longer-lasting responses.

Factors that influence a child's emotional response include but are not limited to:

- Involvement with the emergency
- Previous traumatic or stressful events
- Personal belief and understanding of how chronic the situation is
- Loss of a loved one or someone close
- Physical injury
- Responses of the adults to the situation
- Relationships with family members
- Reliving the event repeatedly including through media coverage
- Change in familiar living conditions and routines

Common reactions:

- **Infants - 2 years:** cry and are cranky more than usual or engage in tantrum like behavior, clinginess
- **3 years - 6 years:** engaging in behavior they have previously outgrown, tantrums, sleeping difficulties
- **7 years - 10 years:** fear the event will reoccur, varying communication about the event, difficulty concentrating
- **Preteens - Teenagers:** acting out, more afraid to leave home, withdrawal from social activities with peers, feelings of being overwhelmed, intense emotions, arguing and fighting with individuals close to them



Managing Virtual and Face to Face Learning

- Manage the Three R's
 - Relationships
 - Building Relationships: 2 to 10 rule. Take 2 minutes over the course of 10 days to strengthen

- Eat breakfast
- Limit screen time during meals
- Meal plan on Sunday and prepare meals for the week
- **Connect with others:** express your feelings and emotions in a positive way
 - *Name It to Tame It:* during the situation that is causing stress, identify which emotion(s) you're feeling, say it out loud or write it down
 - *Progressive Muscle Relaxation:* find a quiet space and get into a comfortable position (sitting or laying), start with your feet and tense the muscles in your feet, hold for 5-10 seconds, relax for 15-20 seconds with breathing, repeat with muscles moving up the body
- **Avoid too much exposure to news:** remain informed by checking in on updates from health officials, but always check your sources to ensure they are reliable
- **Enjoy the positives:** doing what makes you happy helps provide the ability to cope with stress
 - "Taking care of yourself doesn't mean 'me first' it means 'me too.'" - L.K. Knost
- **Put less pressure on yourself:** self-compassion is not self-pity, but it is extending the same kindness to yourself as you would to others.
- **Getting a Good Night's Rest:** provides your brain with the time to recharge which is when it learns and makes memories.
 - *Create a relaxing sleep environment:* utilize this area for sleeping, refrain from watching TV, working, studying or other mentally stimulating activities
 - *Refrain from discussing or dealing with stressful events or situations right before bed*
 - *Set and maintain a sleep schedule:* helps to develop a routine for your body
 - *Limit naps taken throughout the day*
 - *Regularly exercise:* even 10 minutes or movement throughout the day makes a big difference
 - *Avoid late night meals and alcohol right before bed:* if you are feeling hungry before bed, eat a light and healthy snack
 - *Refrain from nicotine or caffeine right before bed*
 - *Create a calming environment before bed:* read a book, do crossword puzzles, take a bath or shower, listen to calming music. Limit the amount of screen time
 - *Takes notes on your stressful thoughts throughout the night and check them in the morning*
 - *Get Up:* if you do not fall asleep within 30 minutes of laying down, get up and engage in a positive calming activity like reading a book or completing a puzzle.

the relationship between you and the child or engage in a family activity

- Teacher/Parent Relationships: reach out to your child’s teacher concerning issues regarding homework, organization, daily routines, and keeping up with classwork
- Routines
 - Create a weekly schedule that includes academic time, family meetings, down time, and family projects
 - Rapid Reset: techniques used to calm the mind and body by focusing on the physical sensations
 - Push against a wall
 - Take a sip of water
 - Take a quick walk
- Resilience
 - Encourage teamwork, creative problem-solving, celebrate successes (even if they are small successes), model healthy strategies for managing stress
 - Practice identifying emotions and strategies to help manage those feelings. Children can use hand signals to identify when they are feeling a certain way and need help.

Additional Resources:

- [Coping with Traumatic Events \(Video\)](#) - cdc.gov
- [Essential Life Skills for Kids: Stress Management](#) - Shen-Li Lee
- [Build a Teen Stress Management Plan](#) - Center for Parent and Teen Communication
- *Rapid Resets*
 - [Pushing a Wall to Settle the Nervous System](#) - Edutopia
 - [Taking a Walk to De-Escalate](#) - Edutopia
 - [Sipping Water for Self-Care During the Day](#) - Edutopia
 - [Heavy Work to Calm the Brain](#) - Edutopia



Helping children cope with stress

- Children learn to react by observing the people around them
 - React to situations in a calm and confident manner
 - Provide reassurance
 - Practice mindfulness
 - Conduct “think alouds” when you are practicing stress management strategies
- Develop and review safety plans to increase confidence in handling stressful situations
- Keep communication simple and appropriate for the child’s age. Explain the event in a way they can understand.
- Correct misinformation about the event
- Participate in virtual playdates or meet ups
- Get outside: play, read a book, engage in whole family activities
- Stay organized and create a calendar: it is okay to say no to activities. Prioritize things in your daily routine that need to be accomplished and schedule them. Try to not overbook schedules
- Develop a stress management plan: problem solve, maintain a healthy lifestyle, manage emotions, give back.

Work with your child to identify strategies to practice and work for him/her. Many strategies that work could be practiced with your child.

If you have a child in need of support and/or resources click on the following link.
[Student Support Request Form](#)

The Maryland Coalition for Families is available to provide the following supports

- Parents and caregivers of children with mental health needs
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with substance use disorder
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with problem gambling

Families and others can reach MCF by:

- Calling our statewide intake line at 410-703-8267
- Emailing info@mdcoalition.org