Santa Paula Unified School District

Mental Health Matters

February 2025

Helping Children and Adolescents Cope With Traumatic Events

Every year, children and adolescents experience disasters and other traumatic events. Family, friends, and trusted adults play an essential role in helping youth cope with these experiences.

What can adults do to help?

How adults respond to trauma can strongly influence how children and adolescents react to trauma. When caregivers and family members take steps to support their own ability to cope, they can provide better care for others.

Caregivers and family members can help by creating a safe and supportive environment, remaining as calm as possible, and reducing stressors. Children and adolescents need to know that their family members love them and will do their best to take care of them.

Do:

- Ensure children and adolescents are safe and that their basic needs are addressed.
- Allow them to be sad or cry.
- Let them talk, write, or draw pictures about the event and their feelings.
- Limit their exposure to repetitive news reports about traumatic events.
- Let them sleep in your room (for a short time) or sleep with a light on if they are having trouble sleeping.
- Try to stick to routines, such as reading bedtime stories, eating dinner together, and playing games.
- Help them feel in control by letting them make some decisions for themselves, such as choosing their meals or picking out their clothes.
- Pay attention to sudden changes in behaviors, speech, language use, or strong emotions.
- Contact a health care provider if new problems develop, particularly if any of the following symptoms occur for more than a few weeks:
- Having flashbacks (reliving the event)
- Having a racing heart and sweating
- Being easily startled
- Being emotionally numb
- Being very sad or depressed

Full article found at https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-disasters-and-other-traumatic-events

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SPUSD

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In case of an Emergency:

- **911 For Immediate Support**
- **Ventura County Crisis Team (866) 998-2243 –(24 hours)**



The Power of Self-Love

Self-love has become a popular concept, but what does it mean to love yourself? And more importantly, how do we put it into practice? Let's explore the concept of self-love and how learning to love yourself can improve your mental health and well-being.

Defining Self-Love

Self-love entails accepting yourself wholeheartedly, treating yourself with kindness and respect, and prioritizing your physical and emotional health. It goes beyond mere actions and extends to your thoughts and feelings about yourself.

Loving yourself entails maintaining an overall positive outlook about who you are. This doesn't mean that you always feel positive about yourself, as that would be unrealistic. For instance, there may be moments when you feel upset, angry, or disappointed with yourself, and yet you can still love yourself—just as you can still love your child or partner despite occasionally being angry with them.

The Importance of Self-Love

Self-love lays the foundation for assertiveness, establishing boundaries, nurturing healthy relationships, practicing self-care, pursuing personal interests and goals, and feeling pride in one's identity. Without self-love, we're prone to harsh self-criticism and may succumb to people-pleasing tendencies and perfectionism. We may tolerate mistreatment from others, disregard our own needs and feelings due to a lack of self-worth, and make choices that undermine our best interests.

Examples of Self-Love

The following examples may help you understand self-love better.

- Self-compassion: Treat yourself with kindness, understanding, and empathy, especially during challenging times. Acknowledge that you are human and deserving of love and forgiveness.
- Setting boundaries: Recognizing and asserting your needs, and communicating them clearly to others. Prioritize your well-being by saying "no" to things that drain your energy or compromise your values.
- Practicing self-care: Engaging in activities that nourish your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This can include activities like exercising, practicing mindfulness or meditation, getting enough sleep, or enjoying a hobby.
- Celebrating your achievements: Acknowledging and celebrating your accomplishments, no matter how big or small. For example, treat yourself to something you enjoy, reflect on your growth, or share your successes with trusted friends or loved ones.
- Positive self-talk: Cultivating a positive inner dialogue and challenging negative self-talk. Replace self-critical thoughts with affirmations and reminders of your strengths, capabilities, and worthiness.
- Self-acceptance: Embracing your flaws, quirks, and imperfections. Recognize that you are unique and that your worth is not determined by external standards or comparisons to others.

Full article found at https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/conquering-codependency/202306/the-power-of-self-love