

TRAUMA: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

How Trauma Affects a Child's World

A traumatic event is something scary, dangerous, or violent that makes a person feel unsafe. Seeing something bad happen to a loved one can also be traumatic. This is especially true for young children. If the people they depend on feel unsafe, they feel unsafe too. Traumatic events can cause big feelings and physical reactions that can last a long time and make it hard to live a normal life. Trauma can happen to anyone, no matter how old they are or where they come from. Sometimes what is traumatic for one person, may not be traumatic for others and vice versa.

What Causes Trauma in Children?

Lots of things can be traumatic. Here are some examples:

- Not getting basic needs met (like food or a safe place to live)
- Physical, sexual, or verbal abuse
- Bullying
- Losing a loved one suddenly
- Problems with drugs or alcohol (for the child or in the family)
- Seeing someone die
- Seeing someone get hurt
- Scary medical treatments
- Natural disasters (like hurricanes or earthquakes)
- Serious accidents
- Violence at school or in the community
- Being a refugee or living through a war



Spotting the Signs of Childhood Trauma: When to Seek Help

Trauma shows up in different ways depending on what happened, how old the child is, and how many times it happened.

- **Physical Signs:** Trouble sleeping, bad dreams, changes in eating or energy, bruises or bleeding, fast heartbeat, throwing up, lots of doctor visits, getting sick in unusual ways (like STDs in a young child), losing hair, looking messy, acting younger than their age (like a potty-trained child having accidents).
- **Psychological Signs:** Changes in behavior, feeling sad, not wanting to be around people, trouble paying attention, getting angry easily, low self-esteem, feeling scared when remembering or seeing something that reminds them of the trauma.

MORE INFORMATION

Pediatric Behavioral Health Emergency Service
Cohen's Emergency Room, Ground Floor
718-470-3768 or Dial 911

Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care
269-01 76th Avenue, New Hyde Park
718-470-3148

Pediatric Behavioral Health Rockville Centre
100 Merrick Road, Rockville Centre
516-927-1630

Pediatric Behavioral Health Mineola
156 First Street, Mineola
516-321-5770

Pediatric Behavioral Health Commack
2171 Jericho Tpke, Commack
631-775-3280

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Supporting Your Child Through Trauma

Bad things can happen even when grown-ups try their best to keep kids safe. Here's what parents can do:

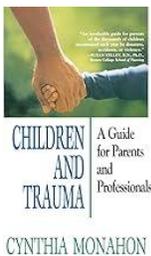
- Assure your child you believe them and will protect them.
- Emphasize that the abuse is not their fault.
- Show them you love and support them.
- Ask trusted adults or officials for help ensuring safety.
- Address school-based issues with the school.
- If home is unsafe, find a safe place to stay.
- Tell authorities (police, school) if someone is hurting your child.

Finding the Right Treatment for Your Child's Trauma

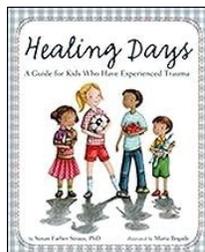
- **Medicine:** Can help with sadness, anger, worries, or sleep problems. Ask a doctor.
- **Therapy:** Special therapies like TF-CBT can help kids with trauma. EMDR and psychodynamic therapy are other options.

Related Content:

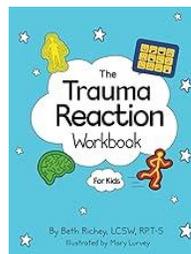
BOOKS



Children and Trauma
By: Cynthia Monahon



Healing Days By:
Susan Farber Straus,
PhD and Maria Bogade



*The Trauma
Reaction
Workbook* By:
Beth Richey

APPS



*PTSD Family
Coach*



StairCoach



Calm

Additional Resources:

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

<https://www.nctsn.org/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<https://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma/understanding-child-trauma>

National Institute of Mental Health

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/helping-children-and-adolescents-cope-with-disasters-and-other-traumatic-events>