

How to support your child through difficult events

LOVE and comfort

Reassure your children that they are safe and loved, that you are also safe, and that there are a lot of helpers providing care to those in need.



LISTEN and validate

If your child knows about the event, ask how they feel about it, and what they have heard from other sources (clear up any misinformation).



LEAD by looking after yourself

Leave time for yourself, as a caregiver, to take care of your own needs, thoughts, and feelings. Trauma events may bring up difficult memories, images, and emotions.



LIMIT media exposure

Try to limit screen time related to distressing topics for yourself and your child. This will reduce exposure to trauma and misinformation. Check in to see if they saw anything online that they found upsetting or confusing.



Signs your child may need extra support

Traumatic events may evoke intense emotions and stress. Sometimes children benefit from additional support. Below are some signs to look out for.



TODDLER

- Seems more fearful, withdrawn
- Clingy with caregiver, does not want to separate from caregivers
- Crying, screaming or whining
- Returns to younger behaviour (bedwetting, thumb sucking)
- Seems to be 'stunned/frozen'

CHILD

- May not want to do things that they used to enjoy
- Experiences nightmares
- May have problems focusing on homework or school work
- Feels sad, or numb
- May have more worries or fear of death for self or others
- May start to have worries or fears they did not have before

TEENAGER

- Recalls upsetting memories (flashbacks), nightmares
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing on school work/homework
- May increase use of substance (alcohol, drugs, nicotine)
- Withdraws from others, isolates from friends or family
- May experience changes of mood, increased anger, sadness, disrespectful or aggressive
- Loses interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Thinks of harming self or thoughts of wanting to end life (suicide)

Local Resources



Need help now?

Emergency: 911

Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line: 1-888-429-8167*

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868*

*These hotlines are toll-free. In an emergency, you can also go to your closest emergency department.

Need services and support?

Family Doctor

Talk to your family doctor or healthcare practitioner if you are connected to one.

Mental Health and Addictions Services

Call **1-855-922-1122*** to access the toll-free IWK & Nova Scotia Health Mental Health and Addictions Central Intake line. *Self-referral

Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

If you are an ISANS client, contact the staff you are working with to access programs that can support you.

Not yet a client? Reach out any time to connect with the Wellness or the Family Support Programs: wellness@isans.ca, familysupport@isans.ca. You can email in English or in your own language.

YMCA Immigrant Services

The YMCA delivers community-based support that is inclusive and welcoming. To access programs and outreach services for newcomer children, youth and families, call **902 457 9622**.