

NEVADA
PEP
Strengthening Families *with*
Education • Empowerment • Encouragement

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

Welcome To Nevada PEP

Content and Topic Outline

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- Word of Caution & Self-Care
- What is Trauma
- Types of Trauma
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Word of Caution & Self-Care

This topic may be very sensitive for our audience. If you have experienced trauma yourself, and/or your child or family member has experienced trauma, this content may be triggering.

Please take care of yourself, reach out to your support system and use your own coping skills.

We are here to assist with education, support and referrals as you and your family may need.

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WHAT IS TRAUMA & PTSD?

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What is Trauma?

- Trauma occurs when an adult, adolescent or child is exposed to actual or threatened death, serious injury or violence.
- The person can directly experience the event, witness the event or learn about an event that occurred to a close family member or friend.
- Trauma can also happen to the "helpers" in our community, such as first responders, medical personnel, and even counselors.
- According to SAMHSA "individual trauma result from an event or series of events that is experienced as physically or emotionally harmful."




TYPES OF TRAUMA

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Types of Trauma:

- Inside the Home – Domestic Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Family Member Illness or Death.
- Outside the Home – Car Accident, Neighborhood Violence, Abuse not by a Caregiver, School Violence, Racism/Bullying.
- Community – Natural Disaster, Terrorism, Pandemic
- Complex Trauma – can occur when a person has experienced multiple traumas in their lifetime.

- We have all been managing a "Global Traumatic Event" with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Even if you have not experienced the loss of a family member, friend, or loved one, COVID-19 has been a traumatic event for all humans.




PTSD & DSM5

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Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and the DSM5:

- PTSD is diagnosed using the DSM5.
- This helps guide treatment and helps to understand if a child, adolescent or adult is dealing with PTSD following a trauma.
- Not everyone who is exposed to a trauma will develop PTSD.
- According to the DSM5 those who have PTSD may experience intrusive symptoms, such as distressing memories, dreams, and in children play that resembles the trauma.
- There may be negative beliefs about oneself ("I am bad") or the world ("Nowhere is safe").
- There may also be arousal symptoms, such as feeling irritable or angry, and sleep problems.
- This should be diagnosed by a professional that has experience and training in working with trauma and PTSD.




TRIGGERS & THE 5 SENSES

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Triggers & The 5 Senses:

- Triggers are defined as something that prompts an “involuntary recall” of a previous traumatic experience.
- It is something that reminds our brain of the traumatic event.
- The brain is a fantastic warning system that alerts the body that there is danger around us.
- Triggers are often tied to the 5 senses.
- We may See, Hear, Smell, Taste or Touch something that reminds our brain of the traumatic event.
- We may not even be aware the something is a trigger.
- Example – you have been bit by a large dog – when you see or are around large dogs, you become nervous and start to sweat.




COPING & THE 5 SENSES

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Coping & The 5 Senses:

- Just as the 5 senses can be a trigger for the brain to recall a traumatic event, the 5 senses can be used to calm the mind and body.
- Help your child or youth by directing them toward the 5 senses when they become anxious or stressed.
- Sight – look at peaceful pictures or go outside in nature and use your sight to connect you to peace.
- Sound – listen to calming music (or loud music), relaxation sounds, such as ocean, rain or white noise.
- Smell – use particular smells through lotion, sprays, or candles in your environment.
- Taste – use a favorite candy or gum for relaxation.
- Touch – pets or animals, soft blanket, or pillow.



GROUNDING TECHNIQUES & TREATMENT

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Grounding Techniques & Treatment:

- Grounding Techniques are strategies that can help a person manage their traumatic memories or strong emotions.
- Grounding Techniques help the child, adolescent or adult to be fully in the “present” where they are safe, instead of in the “past” where their trauma occurred.
- We will provide links to information on grounding techniques at the end of this presentation. They should be practiced when you are not stressed, so that you can find what works.
- If you decide to seek out treatment for trauma or PTSD, look for a provider that focuses on trauma, has experience with trauma, and works from a family-centered philosophy.
- You are the expert on your experience, your child or adolescent, and your family!!!

RESOURCES & QUESTIONS?

Resources:

- <https://www.nctsn.org/> - National Child Traumatic Stress Network - **OUR MISSION** is to raise the standard of care and improve access to **services for traumatized children, their families and communities** throughout the United States.
- <https://www.samhsa.gov> - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.
- Grounding Techniques - <https://mended-hearts.org/grounding-techniques-for-kids-with-anxiety-that-parents-may-benefit-from-too/> - you can Google "Grounding Techniques for Children and Adolescents" and there is a lot of great information out there!

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THANK YOU!

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Helping Children and Adolescents Cope With Disasters and Other Traumatic Events

What Parents, Rescue Workers, and the Community Can Do



National Institute
of Mental Health

Each year, children and adolescents experience disasters and other traumatic events. Parents, rescue workers, and members of the larger community can help children start the process of recovery and overcome these experiences.

What is trauma?

When people think of trauma, they often focus on physical injuries. However, people also can experience psychological trauma after witnessing or experiencing distressing events.

Trauma can be caused by natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods. It also can be caused by acts of violence—such as terrorist attacks and mass shootings—as well as motor vehicle and other accidents.

Reactions to trauma can be immediate or delayed. Responses may differ in severity and can include a wide range of behaviors and responses, sometimes influenced by culture.

Factors that may make people more sensitive to trauma include:

- ▶ Having direct involvement in the trauma, especially as a victim
- ▶ Having severe or prolonged exposure to the event
- ▶ Having a personal history of prior trauma
- ▶ Having a family or personal history of mental illness or severe behavioral problems
- ▶ Having limited social support or a lack of caring family and friends
- ▶ Having ongoing life stressors such as moving to a new home or new school

Common Responses to Trauma Among Children

Children age five and younger may:

- ▶ Cling to parents or caregivers.
- ▶ Cry and be tearful.
- ▶ Have tantrums and be irritable.
- ▶ Complain of physical problems such as stomachaches or headaches.
- ▶ Suddenly return to behaviors such as bed-wetting and thumb-sucking.
- ▶ Show increased fearfulness (for example, of the dark, monsters, or being alone).
- ▶ Incorporate aspects of the traumatic event into imaginary play.

Children age six to 11 may:

- ▶ Have problems in school.
- ▶ Isolate themselves from family and friends.
- ▶ Have nightmares, refuse to go to bed, or experience other sleep problems.
- ▶ Become irritable, angry, or disruptive.
- ▶ Be unable to concentrate.
- ▶ Complain of physical problems such as stomachaches and headaches.
- ▶ Develop unfounded fears.
- ▶ Lose interest in fun activities.

Adolescents age 12 to 17 may:

- ▶ Have nightmares or other sleep problems.
- ▶ Avoid reminders of the event.
- ▶ Use or abuse drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.
- ▶ Be disruptive or disrespectful or behave destructively.
- ▶ Complain of physical problems such as stomachaches and headaches.
- ▶ Become isolated from friends and family.
- ▶ Be angry or resentful.
- ▶ Lose interest in fun activities.

In addition, children and adolescents may feel guilty for not preventing injury or deaths. They also may have thoughts of revenge.

Many of these are normal and expected early responses, which for most people will lessen with time. If they last for more than a month, contact a licensed mental health professional.

If You or Someone You Know Is in Crisis and Needs Immediate Help

Some symptoms require immediate emergency care. If you or someone you know is thinking about harming themselves or attempting suicide, seek help right away:

- ▶ Call your doctor.
- ▶ Call 911 for emergency services or go to the nearest emergency room.
- ▶ Call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**, a 24-hour toll-free hotline, at 800-273-TALK (8255). The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Lifeline via TTY at 800-799-4889. The Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.
- ▶ Contact social media outlets directly if you are concerned about a person's social media updates or dial 911 in an emergency. For more information about how to contact social media outlets, visit the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-someone-else>.

Take any comments about suicide or wishing to die seriously—even those said by children and adolescents. Even if you do not believe your family member or friend will attempt suicide, the person is in distress and can benefit from your help in finding treatment. For more information about suicide prevention, visit www.nimh.nih.gov (search word: suicide prevention).

Disaster Distress Helpline

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's **Disaster Distress Helpline** provides crisis counseling (24 hours a day, 365 days a year) for those experiencing emotional distress due to natural or human-made disasters. This service is provided in more than 100 languages and is confidential. To contact the helpline:

- ▶ Call or text 800-985-5990.
 - Spanish speakers can call 800-985-5990 and press 2 for 24/7 bilingual support.
 - The deaf and hard of hearing can contact the Helpline via TTY at 800-846-8517.
- ▶ Visit <https://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov>.

Help in the First Days and Weeks

After a disaster or other traumatic event, there are steps people can take to help adult trauma survivors cope, making it easier for them to provide better care for children and adolescents. These include creating safe conditions, remaining calm, being friendly, and connecting with others. Being sensitive to people under stress and respecting their decisions is important.

When possible, help people:

- ▶ Get food.
- ▶ Find a safe place to live.
- ▶ Get help from a doctor or nurse.
- ▶ Connect with loved ones or friends.
- ▶ Find information on where to get help.

Don't:

- ▶ Force people to tell their stories.
- ▶ Probe for personal details.
- ▶ Say things like “everything will be OK” or “at least you survived.”
- ▶ Say what you think people should feel or how people should have acted.
- ▶ Say people suffered because they deserved it.
- ▶ Be negative about available help.
- ▶ Make promises that you can't keep, such as “you will go home soon.”

What can parents do to help children and adolescents?

After a traumatic event, parents and family members should identify and address their own feelings—this can allow them to help others. Explain to children what happened and let them know that:

- ▶ You love them.
- ▶ The event was not their fault.
- ▶ You will do your best to take care of them.
- ▶ It's okay for them to feel upset.

Do:

- ▶ Allow children to be sad or cry.
- ▶ Let children talk, write, or draw pictures about the event and their feelings.
- ▶ Limit viewing of repetitive news reports about traumatic events. Young children may not understand that news coverage is about one event and not multiple similar events.
- ▶ Give extra attention to children who have trouble sleeping. Let them sleep with a light on or let them sleep in your room (for a short time).
- ▶ Try to keep your usual routines (or create new routines), such as reading bedtime stories, eating dinner together, or playing games.

- ▶ Help children feel in control when possible by letting them make decisions for themselves, such as choosing meals or picking out clothes.
- ▶ Contact a health professional if, after a month in a safe environment, children are not able to perform their usual routines.
- ▶ Contact a health care provider if new behavioral or emotional problems develop, particularly if these symptoms occur for more than a few weeks:
 - Flashbacks (flashbacks are the mind reliving the event)
 - A racing heart and sweating
 - Being easily startled
 - Being emotionally numb
 - Being very sad or depressed

Don't:

- ▶ Expect children to be brave or tough.
- ▶ Make children discuss the event before they are ready.
- ▶ Get angry if children show strong emotions.
- ▶ Get upset if they begin bed-wetting, acting out, or thumb-sucking.

Children's reactions to trauma are strongly influenced by adults' responses to trauma. Parents can help children by being supportive, by remaining as calm as possible, and by reducing other stressors, such as:

- ▶ Frequent moves or changes in place of residence
- ▶ Long periods away from family and friends
- ▶ Pressures to perform well in school
- ▶ Fighting within the family

When monitoring healing, remember:

- ▶ Healing takes time.
- ▶ Do not ignore severe reactions.
- ▶ Pay attention to sudden changes in behaviors, speech, language use, or strong emotions.

What can rescue workers do to help?

During and after a traumatic experience, rescue workers can help by:

- ▶ Identifying children, adolescents, and families in need of urgent and immediate medical or mental health services.
- ▶ Staying with and helping to calm children and adolescents in acute distress. Signs of acute distress include trembling, rambling, becoming mute, or exhibiting erratic behavior.
- ▶ Protecting children and adolescents from physical danger, exposure to additional traumatic sights and sounds, and onlookers and the media.
- ▶ Kindly but firmly directing children and adolescents away from the event site.
- ▶ Connecting—and keeping—children and adolescents with family and friends.

Rescue workers can reduce survivors' fear and anxiety by using compassionate communication. When communicating with survivors, rescue workers should:

- ▶ Clearly identify themselves and their role in disaster response.
- ▶ Communicate calmly, slowly, and with empathy.
- ▶ Be factual, avoid answering questions outside their area of expertise, and avoid speculation.
- ▶ Acknowledge and be tolerant of strong emotions and behaviors.

What can community members do after a traumatic event?

After a traumatic event, community members should identify and address their own feelings as this may allow them to help others more effectively.

Community members can help children and adolescents by:

- ▶ Offering their buildings and institutions as gathering places to promote support
- ▶ Helping families identify mental health professionals who can counsel children
- ▶ Helping children develop coping skills, problem-solving skills, and ways to deal with fear
- ▶ Holding parent meetings to discuss the event, their child's response, and how parents can help their child
- ▶ Being sensitive to different cultural responses to trauma and stress

Trauma Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Caring for Children in a Disaster

Website: www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters

Disaster Assistance Improvement Program

Website: www.disasterassistance.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Website: www.fema.gov

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Website: www.nctsn.org

Ready—A national public service campaign

Website: www.ready.gov/kids

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

Website: www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness

Uniformed Services University

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

Website: www.cstsonline.org

U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime
Help for Crime Victims
Website: www.ovc.gov/help/index.html

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
National Center for PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)
Website: www.ptsd.va.gov

Finding Help

Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration provides this online resource for locating mental health treatment facilities and programs. Find a facility in your state at <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>. For additional resources, visit www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Asking questions and providing information to your doctor or health care provider can improve your care. Talking with your doctor builds trust and leads to better results, quality, safety, and satisfaction. Visit the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality website for tips at www.ahrq.gov/patients-consumers.

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For More Information

NIMH website

www.nimh.nih.gov

MedlinePlus (National Library of Medicine)

<https://medlineplus.gov>

(En español: <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish>)

ClinicalTrials.gov

www.clinicaltrials.gov

(En español: <https://salud.nih.gov/investigacion-clinica>)

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