

## Help for Children, Youth, Parents, and Providers' Reactions to Traumatic Events

### **For Those Experiencing Distress**

The Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990 or text *TalkWithUs* to 66746) provides immediate counseling to anyone who needs help in dealing with many problems arising from the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut. You can also access the Helpline's website - [www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov](http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov) - or follow on Twitter at @distressline.

Sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Helpline is a 24 hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week resource available for those who are experiencing psychological distress as a result of natural or man-made disasters, incidents of mass violence or any other tragedy affecting America's communities. The Helpline immediately connects callers to trained and caring professionals from the closest crisis counseling center in the nationwide network of centers. The Helpline staff will provide confidential counseling, referrals and other needed support services.

SAMHSA also operates a treatment locator ([www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)) where people can find information about local mental health and substance abuse treatment services in their area as well as information on coping with violence and traumatic events.

### **Highlighted Resources for Children, Parents, and Educators from SAMHSA**

#### ***Children and Youth—SAMHSA Disaster Behavioral Health Information Series installment***

[http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/dbhis\\_children\\_intro.asp](http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/dbhis_children_intro.asp)

This SAMHSA Disaster Behavioral Health Information Series installment focuses on the reactions and mental health needs of children and youth after a disaster and contains resources from both the child trauma and disaster behavioral health fields. The collection includes an annotated bibliography and a section with helpful links to organizations, agencies, and other resources that address disaster preparedness and response issues surrounding children and youth.

- The annotated bibliography is found at [http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/dbhis\\_children\\_bib.asp](http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/dbhis_children_bib.asp)
- Helpful links are found at [http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/dbhis\\_children\\_links.asp](http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/dbhis_children_links.asp)

#### ***Tips for talking with and helping children and youth cope after a disaster or traumatic event: A guide for parents, caregivers, and teachers***

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/KEN01-0093R/KEN01-0093R.pdf>

This tip sheet helps parents, caregivers, and teachers to recognize and address stress responses in children and youth affected by traumatic events such as automobile accidents and disasters. It describes stress reactions that are commonly seen in young trauma survivors from various age groups and offers tips on how to help as well as resources.

#### ***Cultural Awareness: Children and Youth in Disasters Podcast***

<http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/podcasts/cultural-awareness/register.asp>

The goal of this 60-minute podcast is to assist disaster behavioral health responders in providing culturally aware and appropriate disaster behavioral health services for children, youth, and families impacted by natural and human-caused disasters. Featured speakers include April Naturale, Ph.D., of SAMHSA DTAC and Russell T. Jones, Ph.D., of Virginia Tech University.

- This podcast has been archived at <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/podcasts/cultural-awareness/register.asp>.
- The transcript has been archived at <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/podcasts/cultural-awareness/transcript.pdf>.
- The presentation has been archived at <http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/podcasts/cultural-awareness/presentation.pdf>.

***Psychosocial issues for children and adolescents in disasters***

<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Psychosocial-Issues-for-Children-and-Adolescents-in-Disasters/ADM86-1070>

This booklet includes resources for people working with children after a disaster. It covers child development theories in relation to how youth respond emotionally to disasters. It also features suggestions, case studies, and a resource guide.

***Supplemental research bulletin: Children and disasters***

[http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/bulletin/SAMHSA\\_DTAC\\_Supplemental\\_Research\\_Bulletin.htm](http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/bulletin/SAMHSA_DTAC_Supplemental_Research_Bulletin.htm)

This Research Bulletin from SAMHSA examines the emotional impact that natural and human-caused disasters have on children and youth. Developed in July 2012, this bulletin examines five recently published research and literature review articles and provides a discussion of the risk factors linked to children's responses to disaster, protective factors, and resilience. It concludes with suggestions about policy and practice.

**Resources from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network**

• ***It's okay to remember***

<http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/traumatic-grief/what-childhood-traumatic-grief>

This video provides information regarding traumatic grief in children, addresses the three main types of trauma reminders, and illustrates how families can experience the pain of loss and then heal. It features physicians and experts in the field and is appropriate for parents and others who care for children.

• **Parent Tips for Infants and Toddlers**

This document offers a grid to help parents with infants and toddlers understand how their child may be feeling—it also offers an in-depth list of how parents can help their young children cope with disaster.

- [English]  
[http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix\\_e4\\_tips\\_for\\_parents\\_with\\_infants\\_and\\_toddlers.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix_e4_tips_for_parents_with_infants_and_toddlers.pdf)
- [Chinese] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix\\_e3.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix_e3.pdf)
- [Japanese]  
[http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix\\_e4.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix_e4.pdf)
- [Spanish]  
[http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix\\_e4\\_bebes.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix_e4_bebes.pdf)

- **Parent Tips for Preschoolers**

This document provides information for parents including reactions and/or behavior that may occur after a disaster including suggestions for what to say and do once the disaster is over.

- [English] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix\\_e5\\_tips\\_for\\_parents\\_with\\_preschool\\_children.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix_e5_tips_for_parents_with_preschool_children.pdf)
- [Chinese] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix\\_e4.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix_e4.pdf)
- [Japanese] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix\\_e5.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix_e5.pdf)
- [Spanish] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix\\_e5\\_prescolar.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix_e5_prescolar.pdf)

- **Parent Tips for School-age Children**

This document offers information on common reactions after a disaster and how parents can respond to their school-age children.

- [English] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix\\_e6\\_tips\\_for\\_parents\\_with\\_schoolage\\_children.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix_e6_tips_for_parents_with_schoolage_children.pdf)
- [Chinese] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix\\_e5.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix_e5.pdf)
- [Japanese] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix\\_e6.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix_e6.pdf)
- [Spanish] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix\\_e6\\_escolar.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix_e6_escolar.pdf)

- **Parent Tips for Adolescents**

This document will provide parents with tips for how to respond to their adolescent child after a disaster. The tips include possible reactions, responses, and examples of things to do and say.

- [English] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix\\_e7\\_tips\\_for\\_parents\\_with\\_adolescents.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/english/appendix_e7_tips_for_parents_with_adolescents.pdf)
- [Chinese] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix\\_e6.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/chinese/appendix_e6.pdf)
- [Japanese] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix\\_e7\\_adolescentes.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/japanese/appendix_e7_adolescentes.pdf)
- [Spanish] [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix\\_e7\\_adolescentes.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/pfa/spanish/appendix_e7_adolescentes.pdf)

- **Tips for Parents on Media Coverage**

[http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/tips\\_for\\_parents\\_media\\_final.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/tips_for_parents_media_final.pdf)

This tip sheet provides information for parents on how to limit a child's exposure to disturbing media images after an earthquake.

**Additional Resources for Children, Parents, and Educators**

***Helping children cope with violence and disasters***

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/children-and-violence.shtml>

The National Institute for Mental Health produced this page of guidance to educators, parents, professional caregivers, and community members on practical steps that can help children cope with exposure to violence either firsthand or in the media.

***Tips for adults on how to talk with children about the Connecticut school shooting***

[http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Tips for Adults on How to Talk with Children About Connecticut School Shooting.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Tips_for_Adults_on_How_to_Talk_with_Children_About_Connecticut_School_Shooting.pdf)

This resource is being promoted by the U.S. Department of Education, and provides practical assistance for parents, child care providers, teachers, and other adults on how to answer children's questions

***After a loved one dies—how children grieve; And how parents and other adults can support them***

<http://www.newyorklife.com/newyorklife.com/General/FileLink/Static%20Files/New%20York%20Life%20Foundation%20Bereavement%20Guide%20-%20After%20a%20Loved%20One%20Dies%20.pdf>

This 26-page booklet is for parents and other adults to help children who have suffered the loss of a parent or loved one to get through their grief.

***Helping students cope with media coverage of disasters: A fact sheet for teachers and school staff***

[http://www.oumedicine.com/docs/ad-psychiatry-workfiles/school\\_disaster\\_media\\_factsheet\\_2011.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://www.oumedicine.com/docs/ad-psychiatry-workfiles/school_disaster_media_factsheet_2011.pdf?sfvrsn=2)

According to this fact sheet, it "provides an overview of how media coverage of a disaster may affect students and suggests strategies that people working in schools can use to address these effects. The strategies described in this fact sheet can be used by teachers, school counselors, school social workers, other school staff members, and school administrators.

***Helping your child cope with media coverage of disasters: A fact sheet for parents***

[http://www.oumedicine.com/docs/ad-psychiatry-workfiles/parent\\_disaster\\_media\\_factsheet\\_2011.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://www.oumedicine.com/docs/ad-psychiatry-workfiles/parent_disaster_media_factsheet_2011.pdf?sfvrsn=2)

According to the document, this fact sheet "provides an overview of how media coverage of a disaster may affect your child and suggests strategies that parents can use to address these effects.

***Responding to stressful events: Helping children cope***

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/oes-bsu-02/pdf/helping-child-cope\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/oes-bsu-02/pdf/helping-child-cope_e.pdf)

This packet contains information on helping children cope after a stressful event. It provides information on common reactions and coping techniques.

***Talk, listen, connect: When families grieve***

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/grief>

This collection of resources addresses the difficult topic of the death of a parent and helps families cope with complex emotions, honor the life of a loved one, and find strength in each other. There are components for military families and nonmilitary families.

***Understanding child traumatic stress***

[http://nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/understanding\\_child\\_traumatic\\_stress\\_brochure\\_9-29-05.pdf](http://nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/understanding_child_traumatic_stress_brochure_9-29-05.pdf)

This document discusses the cognitive response to danger as it relates to traumatic experiences or traumatic stress throughout all developmental stages, particularly in children. It provides an overview of posttraumatic stress responses and their severity and duration, as well as posttraumatic stress after chronic or repeated trauma.

#### ***Children and Grief***

[http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts\\_for\\_families/children\\_and\\_grief](http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/children_and_grief)

Information on supporting children and youth who are grieving losses, from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

#### ***Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder***

[http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts\\_for\\_families/posttraumatic\\_stress\\_disorder\\_ptsd](http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/posttraumatic_stress_disorder_ptsd)

Information on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in children and youth from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

#### ***Understanding Violent Behavior in Children and Adolescents***

[http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts\\_for\\_families/understanding\\_violent\\_behavior\\_in\\_children\\_and\\_adolescents](http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/understanding_violent_behavior_in_children_and_adolescents)

Information from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

### **Resources on Trauma and Mass Violence:**

- ***Coping with Violence and Traumatic Events***—This SAMHSA website has a variety of resources for first responders, schools, adults, and families for coping with violence and traumatic events. <http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma/index.aspx>
- ***Dealing with the Effects of Trauma: A Self-Help Guide***—This SAMHSA guide provides more in-depth information on recovering from a traumatic event and is geared for those whose reactions may be lingering. <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Dealing-with-the-Effects-of-Trauma-A-Self-Help-Guide/SMA-3717>
- ***Effects of Traumatic Stress after Mass Violence, Terror, or Disaster***—Developed by the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), this publication provides information regarding normal reactions to abnormal situations. It includes descriptions of common traumatic stress reactions, problematic stress responses, and symptoms of PTSD and Acute Stress Disorder. <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/stress-mv-t-dhtml.asp>
- ***In the Wake of Trauma: Tips for College Students***—This fact sheet helps college students cope with the mental health effects in the aftermath of trauma. It explains normal reactions, emphasizes the importance of talking about feelings, and offers tips for coping. Includes resources for more information. <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/In-the-Wake-of-Trauma-Tips-for-College-Students/KEN01-0092R>
- ***Mass disasters, trauma, and loss***

This brochure explains stress reactions individuals may experience after a disaster, what they can do to recover, and when they should seek professional help.

<http://www.istss.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=PublicEducationPamphlets&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=1464>

- ***Mental Health and Mass Violence: Evidence-Based Early Psychological Intervention for Victims/Survivors of Mass Violence***—This report is targeted to those who deliver psychological interventions to emotionally distressed persons following mass violence, to those who research these issues, and to employers who want to help workers who have experienced this type of emotional trauma. It is also intended to aid officials who must decide what mental health help to include in the local, state, and national responses to survivors of mass violence and terrorism. <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/massviolence.pdf>
- ***Mental Health Care for Ethnic Minority Individuals and Communities in the Aftermath of Disasters and Mass Violence***—This paper reviews research that indicates that ethnic minorities (African American, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos) may suffer more adverse psychological consequences after disasters and mass violence than do white Americans. Guidelines are provided so that disaster behavioral health services can become more culturally responsive and traditional barriers are reduced.
- ***Mental Health Response to Mass Violence and Terrorism: A Field Guide***—This SAMHSA publication is intended for mental health and disaster workers; first responders; government agency employees; and crime victim assistance, faith-based, healthcare, and other service providers who assist survivors and families during the aftermath of mass violence and terrorism. Please let us know if you would like additional free copies. <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Mental-Health-Response-to-Mass-Violence-and-Terrorism-A-Field-Guide/SMA05-4025>
- ***Responding to Victims of Terrorism and Mass Violence Crimes***—This booklet describes the relationship between the Office of Victims of Crime and the American Red Cross and provides guidance about crime victims' rights and needs as well as how to assist victims of terrorism and mass violence crime. It provides a comparison of how natural disasters are similar to and different from disasters caused by criminal human behavior and notes the psychological effects of each.
- ***Violence and Mental Illness: The Facts***—This SAMHSA website discusses the importance of understanding mental illness and promoting social inclusion. [http://www.samhsa.gov/MentalHealth/understanding\\_MentalIllness\\_Factsheet.aspx](http://www.samhsa.gov/MentalHealth/understanding_MentalIllness_Factsheet.aspx)

#### **Resources on Retraumatization and Chronic Stress:**

***Addressing the Traumatic Impact of Disaster on Individuals, Families, and Communities***

[http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/hsem/behavhealth/documents/atc\\_white\\_paper.PDF](http://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/hsem/behavhealth/documents/atc_white_paper.PDF)

Presented at the After the Crisis Initiative: Healing from Trauma after Disasters Expert Panel Meeting. This white paper addresses healing from the trauma induced by a disaster, especially in terms of regaining normalcy and offering and receiving peer support. In addition, the paper focuses on restoring communities with the supports necessary to be sensitive to the recovery

from trauma by individuals, children, and families.

***Coping with Stress***

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandlingStress/>

This webpage from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides clear concise information on coping with stress related to a traumatic event.

***Lessons Learned from School Crises and Emergencies***

[http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL\\_Vol5Issue3.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL_Vol5Issue3.pdf)

This publication from the U.S. Department of Education Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools discusses retraumatization at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) following the 2007 campus shooting of 32 individuals.

***Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event: Managing Your Stress***

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/NMH05-0209R/NMH05-0209R.pdf>

This tip sheet outlines the common signs of stress after a disaster and provides stress reduction strategies.

***Trauma and Retraumatization***

[http://www.witnessjustice.org/violence/docs/trauma\\_retraumatization.pdf](http://www.witnessjustice.org/violence/docs/trauma_retraumatization.pdf)

Presented at the After the Crisis Initiative: Healing from Trauma after Disasters Expert Panel Meeting, this resource paper presents an exposition on the types of trauma and its cumulative and intergeneration effects. It speaks particularly to the continued retraumatization that results from experiencing a disaster.

***Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Event: Managing Your Stress—***

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/NMH05-0209R/NMH05-0209R.pdf>

This tip sheet outlines the common signs of stress after a disaster and provides stress reduction strategies.