

## **Guidelines for parents/guardians to support children through times of grief during and after a traumatic event**

**Be yourself** – Demonstrate your natural concern calmly and in your own words.

**Be available** – Spend time with your child. Attempt to distract your child by reading, walking, going to a movie, etc.

**Listen** – Let your child express his/her thoughts, concerns, feelings, and perceptions in a nonjudgmental, emotionally safe environment.

**Explain** – Talk about what you know in short, truthful statements. Don't be afraid to admit that you do not have all the answers.

**Do not** speculate.

**Develop resiliency** – Your child will look to you for reassurance. Do not convey your own feelings of hopelessness, but rather let your child know that they will get through this difficult period.

**Provide comfort** – Physical and verbal comforts are great healers.

**Attend to physical manifestations of trauma** - Children will often complain of headaches, stomach aches, backaches, etc. Monitor physical symptoms such as loss of appetite, anxiety, sleep disturbance, etc. and determine whether medical intervention is required.

**Maintain regular routines** – As much as possible, attempt to provide normalcy to your child. Humans are creatures of habit and derive comfort from regular routines.

**Monitor media exposure** – Do not overexpose your child to media reports (especially preschool and elementary age children).

**Seek additional support** – When appropriate, your child should be directed to community support agencies.

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