

# What Happened to MY World?

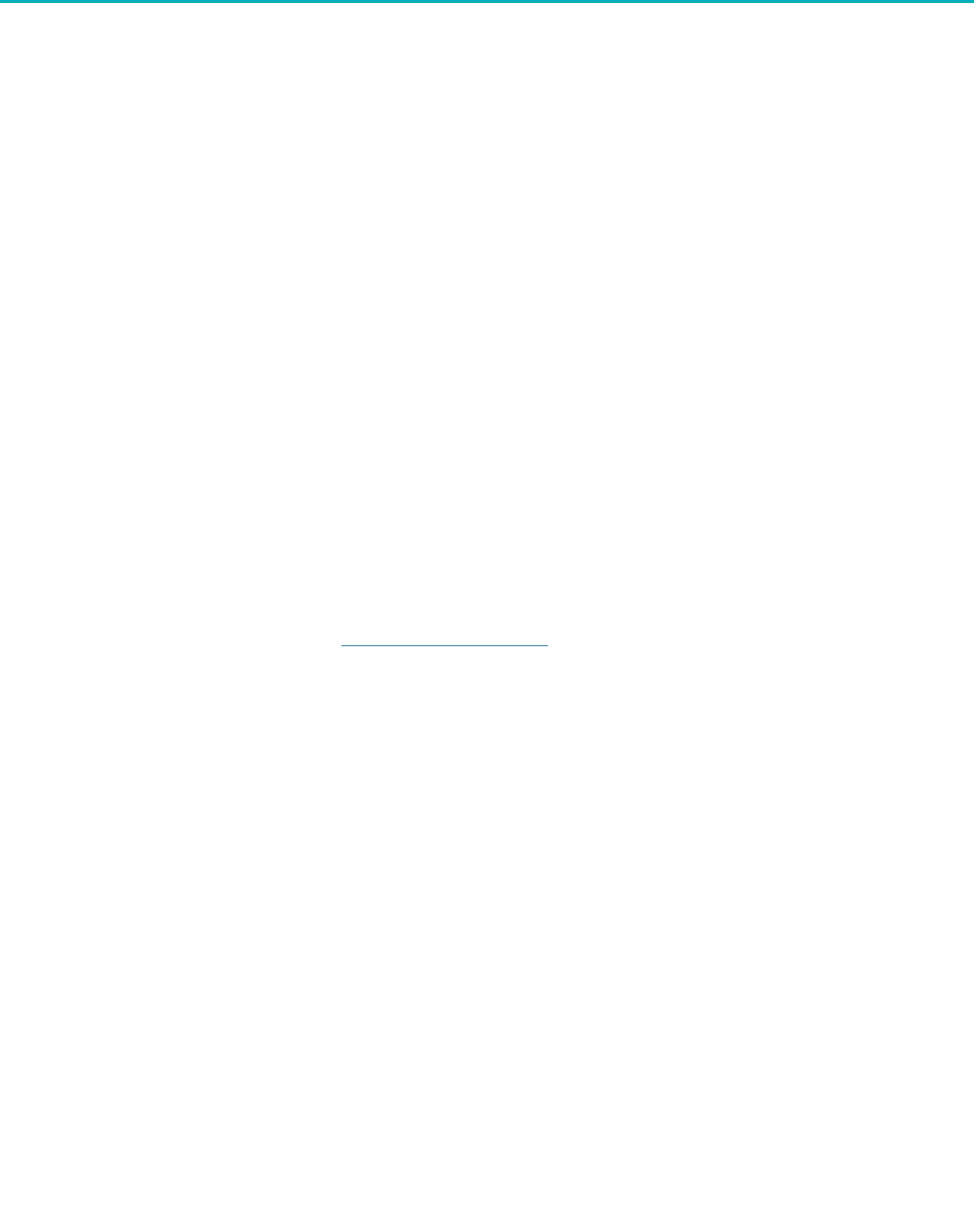
# About This Book

# Table of Contents

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**PART I: Children and Crisis** .....8...







**PART I** explores the four pillars of security, various types of traumas and children's responses, special considerations, and an age-by-age guide on what to expect and how to help.

**PART II** looks at how children can begin to understand both the world of nature at LWV PRVW SRZHUIXO DQG VRPH GLI tFXOW DVSHFWV RI KXP DQ V erupts: death, poverty, and racial tension.

**PART III** offers suggestions for building a strong team before a crisis and helping staff respond during crisis. Emotionally healthy staff are at the heart of strong, effective programs. We can't expect caregivers and others to create a warm, nurturing environment for children when they are struggling with powerful emotions. They simply can't give something they don't have.

The Resources section includes resources for parents and professionals to explore more deeply all the topics introduced in this book. There are websites and books for adults and children on coping with stress, understanding the natural world and

# PART I: Children and Crisis

## What Happened to MY World?

“I came from the weather. The weather was back — JARED, AGE 15

- DUHG OLNH KXQGUHGV RI WKRXVDQGV RI RWKHU FKLOGUHQ uHG -  
homes, pets, and predictable lives when their world was suddenly washed away. And like 4-year-old Emily, a 9/11 survivor, who looked out at the World Trade Center rubble and asked “What happened to the world?,” Jared and everyone else touched by catastrophe were thinking the same things:

Will I be OK?

Will you be OK?

Will everyone I love be OK?

Will the world that I know be OK?

## What Children Need: Pillars of Security

There is nothing more basic than the need to feel secure: to feel that you are all right, right here, right  
QRZ :H IHHO VHFUXH ZKHQ WKH ZRUOG LV VDIH SUHGLFWDEOH DQ  
world as ourselves and will be accepted by the people we encounter. We can relax when we are with  
SHRSOH ZH WUXVW NQRZ ZKDW WR H[SHFW RU KDYH FRQtGHQFH W  
cope with whatever will come our way. This is the exact opposite of how we feel in a crisis.

Young children are perpetual tourists without much life experience, truly strangers in a strange land. They are developing their minds and bodies at such a rate that they feel like new people each day. Their backlog of life experience is so slight that each day, each new place, each old place brings surprises. Their courage rises and falls like the tides. As we grow up and experience more of the world, good and bad, our life experience gives us more of a base, but we depend on four pillars of security to help us face life’s struggles: people, places, routines, and rituals.

**People:** For most of us, the most insecure feeling of all is feeling alone — no hand to hold, no one to look up to, no one to warn us, and no arms to catch us when we stumble. Security comes from familiar and trusted loved ones who know and understand us and whom we know



**Routines:** Routines are patterns of actions and expectations, the familiar order of the day, and the tasks that we do protect us from fear of the unknown. The structuring of time into routines has an enormous impact on how we feel. Routines reassure each of us and stabilize groups — the regular meal, the prompt dry diaper, the inevitability of sleep.

**Rituals:** Our individual lives are orderly and meaningful with daily rites that have gained our sleep, the routes taken to work or school. Rituals join routines and the physical order as the bind that holds individuals and groups together in times of stress and uncertainty.

The four pillars are not equal; certainly people matter the most. But places, routines, and rituals are

When you are a child or an adult in a crisis, all four pillars — people, places, routines, rituals — may become shaky or crumble and your world may feel as though it is crashing down upon you — strange people, strange places, strange routines, and few rituals.

The concept of the four pillars is simple yet powerful. Refer back to it often as you work with young children. Thinking about the four pillars (or a lack of them) in a child's life can build patience, empathy, and understanding. It can also offer you a starting point in working with children.

## Types of Trauma

### Society-Shaking Events

**Terrorism and violence.** September 11 touched us all because of the unimaginable horror of planes crashing into buildings, people disappearing into smoke, and rubble covering the streets. Anyone who felt removed from the threat of terror — who thought that mass violence happened only in poor countries or far away on the television or a movie screen — was forever shaken and changed. Subsequent public bombings and shootings — in public places, houses of worship, and schools — have had the same devastating impact. We no longer feel safe.

**Natural disasters.** lost and thrown into chaos, and in the inability at all levels to respond effectively to avoid ongoing the images of desperate people on rooftops or in makeshift boats; the reports of hunger, thirst, and million people were evacuated and a hundred thousand homes were lost, there was widespread relief that it wasn't worse. Since then, we've experienced many more natural disasters, from massively

**Political and social unrest.** While it is not new, the plight of refugees continues to be a global crisis. In

## Secondary Trauma

Natural disasters and other large-scale tragedies touch many people, but not equally or in the same way. Hundreds of thousands of children experienced the force and damage of the hurricanes directly. news culture where dramatic images of horror or grief surround us constantly, millions more children watched the television thinking, “That could have been me or my friend or relative or someone I love.” Others thought, “Why them and not us?”

stress responses when hearing about new, similar events. And there are many others already living with personal trauma or overwhelming stress who are especially vulnerable to witnessing new tragedy from near or afar. There are also children and adults whose natural empathy and high sensitivity to tragedy and trauma leave them particularly exposed to pain in times when fear and heartbreak are ever present.

## Individual Life Challenges

remember that every day untold numbers of children also look around and ask, “What happened to my world?”

- f 2-year-old Eric and his mother leaving behind an abusive, alcoholic father.
- f 9-year-old Tonya, her three brothers and sisters, and her mother and grandmother looking for shelter after another eviction.

of families into a sudden descent of confusion, fear, anger, and the unknown. The child whose predictable personal world is collapsing will live with the same fear and uncertainty as the child in a national crisis.

There are, of course, differences when a calamity or crisis is personal rather than communal. The sense of isolation and powerlessness may be greater — how can the world go on as if nothing happened?

On the other hand, a personal tragedy in a caring community might engender more support because the rest of the community is not in crisis. No individual crisis is exactly the same; each of us is different and the circumstances are unique. But the shock, disbelief, grieving, numbness, anger, mood swings, and inability to go about daily life — the need to talk or the need to be silent — are the same. And our needs for security and hope for the future are the same as well.

## A Few Considerations

When working with children and families, it's important to remember that responses to trauma vary widely depending on the individual circumstances. Consider the following:

- f Degrees of loss and trauma
- f Vulnerability caused by poverty and lack of resources
- f The effects of homelessness
- f Toxic stress
- f Existential or intellectual confusion

## Degrees of Loss and Trauma

My uncle was on the roof, but when they came, when they only took mommas and kids.

## Those Most Vulnerable

When disaster strikes, low-income people tend to fare worse in nearly all cases. In a natural disaster,

**Please note:** Disaster changes us (and our children) in many ways, but we are essentially the same people. We are still shy or modest, or very private, or sensitive to noises or smells, or quirky in all the

# Children Need Our Strength: How Do We Feel?

Adults largely set the emotional landscape for children. Children depend on us to be strong and solid,

**Grief:** For someone I loved, or someone else like me, or the person I was, or the life I led before.

**Anger:** At the people behind the tragedy, the people not helping, and the cruelty and unfairness of it all.

**Guilt:** Why them and not me? Could I have done more?

**Shame and surprise:** It's not like me to behave this way: angry, bitter, blaming, or scared.

**Helplessness:** + R Z F D Q , H Y H U P D N H P \ Z R U O G 2 . D J D L Q "

**Sadness:** Lives lost or adrift, children orphaned, futures turned to mud.

**Isolation or alienation:** I'm probably the only person who feels exactly this way, and I am not sure if anyone understands my feelings.

**Hopelessness and despair:**

f 3UDFWLFDO IXQFWLRQDO KHOS H J ZLWK GHWDLOV DV VPD

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## Avoidance

Symptoms of avoidance may include:

- f Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event
- f Avoiding places, activities, or people that remind you of the traumatic event

## Negative changes in thinking and mood

Symptoms of negative changes in thinking and mood may include:

- f Negative thoughts about yourself, other people, or the world
- f Hopelessness about the future
- f Negative thoughts about the world
- f Feeling detached from family and friends
- f Lack of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- f Feeling emotionally numb

## Changes in physical and emotional reactions

Symptoms of changes in physical and emotional reactions (also called arousal symptoms) may include:

- f Being easily startled or frightened
- f Always being on guard for danger
- f Self-destructive behavior, such as drinking too much or driving too fast
- f Trouble sleeping
- f Trouble concentrating
- f Irritability, angry outbursts, or aggressive behavior
- f Overwhelming guilt or shame

### Source:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc->

## Grief and Loss

### Grief in Adults

Several psychologists have created steps or stages of grief based on their clinical experiences. These stages of grief can offer perspective and understanding.

### Stage Models

([DPSOH (OL]DEHWK .XEOHU 5RVVRV T)LYH 6WDJHV RI \*ULHIU

f Describes the emotional reactions many experience after a loss

f 7KH tYH VWDJHV DUH GHQLDO DQJHU EDUJDLQLQJ GHSUHVVLRO

### Task Models

([DPSOH :RUGHQRV T)RXU 7DVNV RI 0RXUQLQJU

f Describes the process of grieving/work to be done

f Typically include the following concepts: accept the reality of the loss; experience the pain

## Continuing Bonds: What to Do

- f Establish rituals of remembrance (visiting a gravesite, commemorating special days, etc.).
- f Plan comforting memorials or remembrances.
- f Deal with the loved one's personal effects in a way that feels respectful and appropriate.
- f Consider and reconcile one's spiritual beliefs.
- f Continue a relationship with the loved one through prayer, thoughts, or other means.
- f Determine how to handle birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, etc.

## Personal Reconstruction: Questions to Ask

- f What does this mean in my life?
- f + R Z G R , t J X U

## What to Do

### **Be aware of your own feelings about the situation.**

Consider talking with teammates or your administrative team to gain perspective. This can allow you to separate your own grief from the families' and be more objective in your responses. Please remember when discussing sensitive information with others to do so in a private, sensitive, and professional manner that respects families' right to privacy.

### **When families are in crisis, their normal routines often collapse.**

### **Expect change and offer assistance when possible.**

After a loss, people sometimes say and do things they typically wouldn't. Try not to take this personally.

### **Open the door for communication.**

As soon as you hear of a loss, offer support, e.g., "I'm so sorry. I want to be there for your family in whatever way you need."

### **Follow the family's lead.**

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DEOH WR WDON RSHQO\ \$ KXJ RU JHQWOH WRXFK PD\ FRPIRUW VRP  
invasive. Be aware of varying cultural practices and rituals around death, but don't assume that all parents of a particular culture subscribe to those practices.

### **Offer a few words of memorial.**

Comments such as, "He had such beautiful eyes" or "I appreciated his sense of humor," are comforting and give the family permission to talk about the deceased person if they choose to.

### **Maintain a sense of normalcy.**

Continue to talk with the family about a child's progress and growth. Parents often worry about how  
WKHLU FKLOG LV GRLQJ GXULQJ D FULVLV 7KH\ DSSUHFLDWH \RXU

## Taking Care of Yourself

To take care of children, you need to take care of yourself to the extent that you are able. Some ways to do this are to:

- f Accept help from others offering assistance and support with daily responsibilities.
- f Talk about your feelings, when ready, with adults with whom you feel safe, who will really listen without judgment or continual advice.
- f Try to create a daily routine and rituals that support your current needs and those of your family.
- f Eat right and get exercise and adequate sleep.
- f

# Understanding and Supporting Children

## “When will the water ever stop?”

If you are a child watching the news, it never stops. If you happen to be 3 or 4 or 5 years old, still learning to navigate the confusing borders of time and space and what is real and what isn't, you are probably thinking that nature's devastation results in daily destruction.

Some children may also be wondering, “When will it happen to me?” This is the way many young children think when they see things around them. When a friend's sister dies of cancer, the television news reports a child in a fatal car accident, a cousin no longer lives with her dad, or the news relentlessly sensationalizes a child abduction, a child wonders, “When will it happen to me?”

## Every Child Is Different

- f ODD HYHQ DW WKH DJH RI SDLG FORVH DWWHQWLRQ WR 79 UH earthquakes — and nightmares always followed. She worried over and intensely felt the loss of a pet, a friend moving away, and the sorrows of distant others.
- f Six-year-old Alejandro, on the other hand, breezed through his childhood with only a brief pause for the real calamities that occurred around him in his impoverished neighborhood — never imagining it might happen to him.
- f .\OHRV DJH YLYLG LPDJLQDWLRQ DQG KLV HPSDWK\ IRU RWKH tragedy crossed his path.
- f Troy and Tyrel's 9-year-old responses to airplane crashes or devastating natural disasters were VLPLODU :KLOH QRW DSSHDULQJ SDUWLFXODUO\ XSVHW HDFK number of details about the destruction.
- f And 15-year-olds Stephen and Carrie never let on that anything could shake their cool exteriors.

Children are different, both from adults and from each other.

But taking that seriously in practice is not always easy for parents and others who work with children. Children think very differently than adults, and at each stage of development they view the world through their own unique lenses. From birth, children have their own sensitivity to change, to unexpected events, and to distress. They respond to dramatic events and stress in their own ways and with differing intensity.

All children are vulnerable, but not equally. A child already grieving over a lost loved one (a person or a pet), a divorce, or a separation may be more vulnerable, as will children who have families in crisis or who are under stress for any number of reasons. Sensitive and empathetic children will also struggle more to come to terms with events that are disturbing.

All children, even babies, will feel the direct effects of a natural disaster or family crisis — the emotional upset in the air and the change in people, places, routines, and rituals. Life, as they have come to know it, is disrupted and they are thrown off center. Supporting children during times of uncertainty and stress begins with knowing the child.

# Understanding Childhood Stress and Trauma

It is important to note that stress is a healthy part of life, a necessary part of our built-in psychological alert system, and something that most often does not cause permanent negative impact. The purpose of this section is to help all who support children better understand childhood stress and trauma, skillfully nurture healthy responses to stress, and mitigate the effects of unhealthy stress responses.

## Types of Stress

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**Misreading emotions or intent of others:** Natural tendency to scan for the negative in overdrive, e.g., assuming others are talking about or “ganging up” on you.



However, when trauma strikes, this need is intense. Whether children are able to express it or not, they need the consistent and reliable care of at least one adult. This means they can trust this adult to follow through on commitments, ensure their needs are met, and provide reliable compassion, helping the children manage the burden the trauma has caused. Sometimes this is all an adult can do, especially at

## Grief in Children

Children grieve differently than adults. They might not have the verbal skills to articulate their feelings

- f Children's behavior often regresses. They may cry or be clingy. Their sleep and eating patterns change.
- f Children differ in their responses to grief according to temperament, age, and development.
- f Children hear more and see more than we think they do.
- f Children take their cues from the adults around them.

## By Age

### Birth to Age 2

Understanding	Behavior	What Children Need
<p>No concept of death</p> <p>Notices the absence of a loved one</p> <p>Notices changes in routine</p> <p>Picks up on adult emotions</p>	<p>restless, or tearful</p> <p>Changes in sleep, eating, or play</p> <p>Behavior regressions</p>	<p>A calm, consistent routine</p> <p>Patience</p> <p>Extra comfort and reassurance</p> <p>Simple answers</p> <p>Time to play</p>

**Preschool: Ages 3 to 5**

Understanding	Behavior	What Children Need
<p>Death is temporary, e.g., “He’s asleep.”</p> <p>Death happens to “others” but not his immediate circle.</p> <p>Death is reversible.</p>	<p>Changes in behavior, e.g., withdrawal, irritability, aggression, or clinginess</p> <p>Bad dreams; changes in eating, sleeping, and play</p> <p>OLJKW PDNH XS SUHWHQG games about death</p>	<p>Consistent, calm routines</p> <p>Simple, honest answers/time to talk about their feelings</p> <p>Unstructured playtime</p> <p>Patience</p> <p>Participation in rituals or memorials</p> <p>Affection and comfort</p>

**School Age: Ages 5 and Older**

Understanding	Behavior	What Children Need
<p>Understands that death is permanent</p> <p>OLJKW ZRQGHU LI KH and mood caused the death</p> <p>Fears that others will die</p> <p>Worries about how the loss will affect his or her life</p> <p>Wonders about what happens to the body</p> <p>Begins to form spiritual ideas about death</p>	<p>Denials of death; shifts in perspective and mood</p> <p>Nightmares or sleep disturbances</p> <p>Shows lack of interest in previously enjoyable activities</p> <p>Repeatedly asks for details about death</p>	<p>Calm, consistent routines</p> <p>Honest discussions and permission to share their feelings</p> <p>An adjustment of expectations and workload</p> <p>Participation in rituals and memorials</p> <p>Time for unstructured play</p> <p>Affection and comfort</p>



## Resilience and Protective Factors

We all have a natural propensity for resilience. One of the seminal researchers on resilience, \$QQ 0DVWHQ FRLQHG WKH SKUDVH TRUGLQDU\ PDJLFU WR GHVFULB phenomenon. Simply put, resilience is the ability to recover from adversity.

Some children seem to bounce back from terrible circumstances and lead emotionally healthy and productive lives. Without the experiences and expectations of adulthood, it often seems children can recover and adapt to new norms more quickly than adults.

While a lot may depend on personal qualities — e.g., intelligence, an even-tempered nature, or independence — resiliency can be nurtured. The key ingredient is at least one caring adult who believes in the child and provides role modeling and support, helping the child see his or her life as positive and valuable. It may be a parent, relative, teacher, family friend, or even an older sibling.

What frightens children in crisis is the feeling of total helplessness, the feeling that they lack any impact on the environment. Those around them may seem defeated. The caring adult who fosters resiliency nurtures in the child a positive outlook and a sense of personal power, or agency, and helps the child gain mastery over his or her environment.

It is important to nourish personal resilience at all times so it can be available when needed. We should not make the mistake of assuming children will be resilient despite life circumstances, stress, or trauma. Depending on the severity of the adversity and other life circumstances, personal resilience FDQ uXFWXDWH \$V PHQWLRQHG ZKHQ VWUHV V LV VHYHUH LW OHD development.

2IWHQ OLNHQHG WR D EXFNHW RU D EDQN DFFRXQW LW FDQ EH tOO or withdrawn, there is more to draw from and it does not empty. The more secure a person's social

qualities found in resilient children. These children:

- f Feel special and appreciated
- f Set realistic goals and expectations for themselves
- f Solve problems and meet challenges
- f Have productive coping strategies that foster growth
- f Have a sense of their own strengths and weaknesses
- f Feel strong and competent
- f Have good interpersonal skills with adults and children

JRR

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# Children's Reactions by Age

## Children Under 3 Years Old

### Understanding

Pick up on the emotional energy of adults around them

0 D \ X Q G H U V W D Q G S D L Q D Q G W U \ W R F R P I R U W R W K

### Behavior

Crying more than usual

Clinginess

Changes in eating and sleeping habits

Listlessness

Hyperactivity or aggression

Regressive behavior

### What Children Need

Reassurance

Physical and emotional affection

Predictable routines

Peaceful surroundings

Limited or no exposure to conversations  
or news about the event

## 3-to-5-Year-Olds

### Understanding

Pick up on the emotional energy of adults around them

Some understanding of what is going on

Inability to separate fears from reality due to lack of understanding about time, space, and pretend vs. real

Want to comfort others

Anxiety about abandonment

### Behavior

Irritability, anxiety

Increased clinginess or attention-seeking behavior

Need to talk

Hyperactivity, aggressiveness, or listlessness

Changes in eating and sleeping habits

Regressive behavior, such as having toileting accidents

Fear of the dark or of being alone

Behaviors that test adults

### What Children Need

Reassurance

Physical and emotional affection

Predictable routines

Limited exposure to conversations or news about the event

Opportunities to play and reenact situations

Time spent in nature, physical exercise, and mindfulness activities

Art, music, and sensory experiences

Honest, but age-appropriate, answers to questions

Opportunities to help and feel a sense of control and competence

Time away from the traumatic event

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## Primary School-Age Children

### Understanding

- Understand what is real and permanent
  - Lack perspective and context
  - Want to understand and know more
  - Expect honest answers and details
  - Can think about what life is like for others
  - Have realistic fears
  - Often focus on their immediate circle — what things will happen to them or their family
  - Interested in rules, justice, and right and wrong
  - Black-and-white thinking
  - Want to see justice done
  - Want to help
  - Interested in examples of heroes/villains
- , Q u X H Q F H G E \ S H H U V

### Behavior

- Nail biting or thumb-sucking
- Irritability, whining, clinging
- Aggressive behavior at home or school
- Competition with younger siblings for parental attention
- Night terrors, nightmares, fear of the dark
- Avoiding school
- Loss of interest and poor concentration in school
- Withdrawal from peers
- Regressive behavior (reverting to past behaviors)
- Headaches or other physical complaints
- Depression
- Fears about recurring or new disasters
- A need to take on more responsibility for the family and care for others



## Primary School-Age Children Continued

### What Children Need

Nail biting or thumb-sucking

Irritability, whining, clinging

Aggressive behavior at home or school

Competition with younger siblings for parental attention

Night terrors, nightmares, fear of the dark

Avoiding school

Loss of interest and poor concentration in school

Withdrawal from peers

Regressive behavior (reverting to past behaviors)

Headaches or other physical complaints

Depression

Fears about recurring or new disasters

A need to take on more responsibility for the family and care for others

Recognition of their efforts  
during the disaster

Opportunities to help others and participate in community efforts

Help predicting and preparing safety measures to be taken in future disasters

Opportunities to be away from the situation and respite from the focus  
on the crisis or tragedy

Honest, but age-appropriate, answers

Role models demonstrating resilience and effectively  
responding to adversity

Relief from adult expectations and serious situations. Avoid putting adult responsibilities on a child's shoulders, e.g., "You're the man of the family now," "Your mom is counting on you." Instead, help them build their age-appropriate contributions. "Thanks for adding a few more chores to your schedule. It really does help me."

### Understanding/Feelings

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Watch adults' reactions

Peers are very important

Want to help and make a difference

Feelings of powerlessness or anxiety

Striving to be independent (during a crisis, this process is often interrupted)

Can develop maturity and resilience through a crisis

Very interested in knowing about the incident (may pore over news coverage)

Avoid media coverage and conversations about the event

### Behavior

Appetite and sleep disturbances

Headaches or other physical complaints

Increase or decrease in energy level

Indifference, withdrawal, withdrawal



# Ways to Help Children Cope With Stress: A Quick Summary\*

1. Be available.
2. Listen, listen, and listen some more.
3. Be honest and answer children's questions — at their level.
4. Respect differences in children — individual and age based.
5. Encourage consistency, everyday routines, and favorite rituals.
7. Expect and allow for all kinds of emotions.
9. Allow a lot of opportunities and different creative media for expression.

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\* LYH FKRLFHV DQG EH uH[LEOH P DYRLG SRZHU VWUXJJOHV

(QFRXUDJH DFWLYLW\ DQG SOD\

# PART II: Helping Children Live in the World

Children need our views about life, the natural world, and social issues articulated in language they are developmentally able to understand. They observe not just what we say but what we do. How and what we teach our children depends on who we are: our civic nature; our spirituality; and our willingness to learn about events, respond with compassion and generosity, and pass that empathy on to our children.

## Helping Children Understand Crisis and Catastrophe

When crisis or catastrophe envelops our children's world, the most important thing we can do, after ensuring their physical safety, is to be thoughtful and responsive to their emotional and educational needs. The family is a safe haven where children can express their ideas and fears with assurance that their parents will protect them and teach them about the world that they will inherit.

children have at least one caring adult in their lives, but it is the job of all of us to ensure they never have less than one.

### Talking to Children About Crisis and Catastrophe

questions:

- f : LOO , EH 2 . "
- f : LOO \RX EH 2 . "
- f : LOO HYHU\RQH , NQRZ DQG ORYH EH 2 . "
- f : LOO WKH ZR U O G R Z K E H 2 . "

Help the child:

- f Identify his or her own fears through gentle conversation that follows the child's lead. Ask the child what they wonder, what they think, what they imagine.
- f Always try to be realistic while reassuring the child that it is unlikely the catastrophe will happen again the same way. Assure the child that if there is a next time, "We will be ready" (even if you are not feeling entirely sure yourself).
- f Respect the child's fears and remember that fear is not always rational.

In the aftermath of a crisis or catastrophe, children will have a range of reactions. If they have been in harm's way or vulnerable, their wariness, fear, and anxiety will likely increase. If they have only heard about it, they may be curious and even seem cavalier in response. Alternately, they may feel empathy and sorrow for the people who are experiencing it. Some of their reaction depends on how the adults around them are responding.

Young children have limitations in how they can respond to and process emotions, and a spectrum of reactions is normal. The comforting, thoughtful presence of an adult helps dispel young children's fears. Older children also rely on the strong presence of adults and their rationality and optimism.

In these circumstances, children need to hear that:

- f People are working very hard to learn more about early warnings of natural disasters or violent attacks and ways to prevent loss of life and damage to society.
- f As a family or school community, we will devise plans to be prepared and safe.
- f I am always here for you and will do everything I can to protect you.

## Answering Children's Questions

Some questions may test our fundamental social, political, and religious views:

- f "Is nature mad at us?"
- f "Why do some people die and some live?"
- f "Why can't people be saved faster?"
- f "Why does our family have so much and there are many families who are hungry and have nothing?"
- f "Why did we lose everything we had?"

## "How come we couldn't save Granmomma or my dog?"

Children need our best answers, or our honest lack of an answer. Sometimes all we can say is, "Bad things sometimes happen without a reason, but we will always do everything we can to protect ourselves so the chance of a bad thing happening is smaller." Use examples from your own life that they can understand, such as wearing a seat belt to protect themselves in case there is an accident or cutting up food in small bites to avoid choking. Children need our thoughtfulness and willingness to help them seek answers. No child will ever thank us for lying or avoiding questions.

## Before Talking to Children

Even if we only have a moment to think about what to say and how to say it, try to remember to:

- f \* HW \RXU RZQ IHHOLQJVDJJKGWKBYHKDQWVWU DGXOW OLVWHQ V ensure you are ready to talk to a child.
- f Try to be your most thoughtful, calm, and emotionally stable self when you talk to children. Be SUHSDUHG IRU WKH LQHYLWDEOH GLIFXOW TXHVWLRQV DERXW people die, and why some people live.
- f Think not only about what you want to say, but also about how you want it to come across.
- f Watch your words, tone, and body language. You may give a nonverbal message of sadness, anger, confusion, fear, or indifference.
- f Ask children what they think the words that they are using or hearing mean: death, drowning, loss, weather, disaster, hurricane, looter, hero, terrorist, victim, refugee.

- f Understand what they already know and feel before beginning any dialogue by asking, “What are you thinking and feeling?”
- f Find natural opportunities to ask what’s on the child’s mind and follow his or her lead. Recognize the clues in a child’s art, play, or conversations with friends. Accept his or her feelings. Read thoughtfully chosen picture books to support children’s understanding.
- f & K H F N t U V H W D E M I R J L Q J H L W K H U D O D F N R I R U V W U R Q J L Q W H U H V child to draw, play, or talk about his or her feelings, you give permission to freely express scary or angry thoughts.
- f Honestly share your feelings, but always try to be in control of your emotions in the presence of your children.
- f Be strong in a crisis even when feeling sad, scared, confused, or angry. The child needs to draw upon your strength, not take care of you. Demonstrate resilience and optimism.
- f P

behaviors different from our own may lead to racism and cultural bias. In times of crisis, we can



Today, there are more people living in low-lying coastal areas where hurricanes do the most damage. And wetlands, which work like a sponge and help reduce a hurricane's power, have been replaced by development. These changes may be increasing hurricanes' potential damage.

Hurricanes are predictable and can be tracked. Families and communities can prepare for hurricanes to make sure that no one gets hurt and property is protected. Some families don't have as many resources to do this and may be more vulnerable. There are organizations working to help those families. Our family will make sure that we are prepared for the next one.

## :KDW LV D uRRG"

### For preschool children:

Floods are when there is too much water and it covers everything.

### For older children:

\$ uRRG LV ZKHQ ORWV RI ZDWHU uRZV LQWR D GU\ DUHD 7RR PXFK  
RYHUuRZ WKHLU EDQNV DQG uRRG VXUURXQGLQJ DUHDV +LJK RFHD  
D uRRG 6RPHWLPHV WKH VWUXFWXUHV XVHG WR FRQWURO uRRGLC  
DQG WKH ZDWHU UHOHDVHG uRRGV DQ DUHD \$ uDVK uRRG KDSSHQ\

Floods usually take time to develop, and the location can be predicted and planned for. Floods also

KDSSHQ ZKHQ ZDWHU uRZV GRZQKLOO GXH WR JUDYLV\ 3HRSOH ZK  
FDQ EH FDUHIXO DQG SODQ WR HVFDSH ZKHQ uRRGV DUH OLNHO\

## What is a tornado?

### For preschool children:

Tornadoes are very strong storms with winds that that can knock down anything. They are called "twisters" because the wind twists and twirls around. When there are tornado warnings, everyone needs to go to the place that keeps them safe, usually a basement or a room with no windows.

### For older children:

Tornadoes form from thunderclouds and are the most powerful storms for their size. They have

YHU\ IDVW VZLUOLQJ WZLVWLQJ VXFNLQJ ZLQGV RI XS WR PLOH  
hurricanes, which swirl outward, tornadoes or twisters swirl inward and rotate around a funnel of low  
pressure. They look like upside-down cones. Tornadoes usually move above the Earth's surface at 35  
WR PLOHV SHU KRXU PSK EXW FDQ JR XS WR PSK :KHQ WKH\  
destroy everything in their path, such as trees, trucks, bridges, houses and other buildings, and even  
IDUP DQLPDOV \$ WRUQDGRRV SDWK PD\ EH D PLOH RU WZR RU XS V  
8QLWHG 6p V LQ Zp@§RQDE0



:H FDQ NQRZ ZKHQ tUHV DUH OLNHO\ WR KDSSHQ DQG IDPLOLHV FD  
SUHSDUH WR uHH WR VDIHW\ 3URIHVVLQRQDOV DUH ZRUNLQJ RQ QH?  
WR ZLOGtUHV

## Answering the Questions of Child Survivors

I was really scared during that Katrina storm. I could  
I didn't go find my dog Jo Jo, who I hope we find if w  
But I was brave when helping my auntie with baby Ja  
that other hurricane made us leave. I hate the wind.

In the midst of any crisis, whether a violent attack or a natural disaster, everyone is scared, even the wonderful people who rescue others. Some were probably both scared and brave at the same time. Lots of people stayed scared for a long time and still have nightmares and scary thoughts. Police  
RItFHUV tUHtJKWHUV DQG VROGLHUV DOO IHHO VFDUHG VRPHWLPH

### How can I feel better if I had to leave my home?

)(0\$ VXJJHVWV WKDW NLGV WU\ WR UHPHPEHU VL[ WKLQJV VOLJKW

1. Disasters don't last very long. Soon, things will be back to normal, even if the normal is a little different than what it used to be.
2. You can get a new routine even if you can't go home for a while or never go back to the same home. You will settle down into a new place and you will meet new friends.
3. Look to your parents or other adults for help when you feel scared or confused. They will help you understand what is happening. Don't be afraid to ask questions.
4. Sometimes it helps to write about your experiences or to draw pictures about what has happened. You can describe what happened and how you feel.

,WRV 2. WR FU\ GXULQJ D GLVDVWHU EXW UHPHPEHU LW ZLOO JI

6. You may be able to help out. Children of all ages can help in the shelter by babysitting other children, cleaning up, or serving food. You can even help with sandbagging or cleaning up your house after a tornado, hurricane, or earthquake, or by creating care packages for those in need.

### My mom (or dad, grandparent, friend, etc.) is really sad and not herself. Sometimes I think it is my fault. What can I do?

Even if you are not the perfect kid in a time of crisis, how your mom feels is not your fault! Adults can be overwhelmed and confused by their feelings sometimes, too. When it's a bad time for your mom, don't take it personally. Like usual — but maybe a little extra — try to be helpful. She has a lot on her  
PLQG DQG OLNH \RX LV IHHOLQJ VDG DQG WU\LQJ WR tJXUH RXW Z  
you safe. If you are ever worried about your mom (or anyone else) or she is unable to care for your basic needs, like food and shelter, talk to another adult — a neighbor, family member, teacher — or the police right away.





It is important not to shame children's exploration of violence through play and to remember that general statements like "guns are bad" can be confusing to children who have a parent who is in the military. It is important to remember that children are not inherently violent and that violence is a learned behavior. Children who have a parent who is in the military may be exposed to violence through their parent's work or through the media. It is important to provide children with a safe and supportive environment where they can explore their feelings and questions about violence. It is also important to provide children with accurate information about violence and the military. Children should be taught that violence is not a solution to problems and that the military is a profession that serves the country. Children should be encouraged to express their feelings and questions about violence and the military in a safe and supportive environment. It is important to provide children with a safe and supportive environment where they can explore their feelings and questions about violence and the military. It is also important to provide children with accurate information about violence and the military. Children should be taught that violence is not a solution to problems and that the military is a profession that serves the country. Children should be encouraged to express their feelings and questions about violence and the military in a safe and supportive environment.

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million, and the number of people in the public sector who are employed in health care has increased from 2.5 million to 3.5 million (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is ageing, and there is a growing number of people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. This has led to an increase in the number of people who need to be treated in hospitals and other health care settings.

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## Answering Children's Questions About Death

Nobody is very sad when people die.



## Answering Children's Questions About Poverty

+XUULFDQH .DWULQD EURXJKW RXW LQWR WKH RSHQ WKH VDG UHDC  
\$PHULFD 0DQ\ FKLOGUHQ DQG DGXOWV DOO RYHU WKH ZRUOG ZH  
so many poor people in such a rich nation? Poor people are often invisible to middle-class America and the world. They live in different neighborhoods and are rarely on television unless portrayed as problems or threats.

Because of what they see on television, children may associate poverty with race. Children should know that poor people in the United States (and the world) come in all colors and ages, but children and old people make up the highest percentages. There are more poor white people than African Americans or Hispanics. However, a higher percentage of African Americans and Hispanics live in low-income households.

### Why are people poor?

7KHUH DUH FKLOGUHQ DQG IDPLOLHV DOO RYHU WKH ZRUOG ZKR GF  
poor people are hard working but have very low wages; they generally don't come from families with money in the bank. Some people live in areas where there are few jobs and the land or climate makes  
IDUPLQJ GLI tFXOW ,Q VRPH SODFHV LQ WKH ZRUOG DQG HYHQ LQ  
For most poor people and all poor children, it is not their fault that they are poor.

As a matter of fact, in some cases, people who are or have been poor have many strengths that those who are better off may not have, such as resourcefulness in surviving terrible conditions, generosity and deep caring, and connections with others. For example, low-income people tend to give a much  
KLJKHU SHUFHQWDJH RI WKHLU LQFRPH WR FKDWLW\ WKDQ WKH DIU

How you answer older children further will depend on your political views and religion. We all agree that family counts a lot, in one way or another. Children are born into their circumstances. Sometimes luck is an important factor. Sometimes people make bad choices. You might believe that poor people need more economic support and opportunity. You may believe that culture has more to do with  
LW WKDQ HFRQRPLFV DQG ZH QHHG WR KHOS FKDQJH SRRU SHRSOH  
believe that economics and culture are interconnected.

### How can I help people who don't have as much as I have?

- f Treat them as human beings deserving of kindness and empathy. See their strengths, opportunities, and potential.
- f Raise money for people who are in need because of disasters or war.
- f Donate what we don't need to the poor people in our town or contribute to food banks, clothing drives, and holiday giving.
- f Get involved with groups like Habitat for Humanity, which builds homes for those without them, or Heifer International, which helps poor communities begin to be able to produce their own food.
- f Help stop the misrepresentation and false stereotyping by not judging poor people or assuming that they are lazy, stupid, or bad.
- f Do you have any ideas?

## Answering Children's Questions About Race and Prejudice

I asked my mom how come we didn't know any poor people they live in other places. I said we had room so one could live with us.

### Why are lots of other poor people and disaster victims I see on television dark-skinned?

0DQ\ FKLOGUHQ DUH XVHG WR VHHLQJ SLFWXUHV RI SHRSOH RI FRO strike many coastal areas where many of the people had dark skin. There are also many pictures in the PHGLD RI YHU\ SRRU SHRSOH LQ \$IULFD ZKR DUH VXIIHULQJ IURP Z disease.

Poverty is colorblind, but it's not always shown that way on TV. White farmers struggling to keep their IDUPV DuRDW RU SRYHUW\ OHYHO ZKLWH ZDJH HDUQHUV DUH JHQHU in reality.

There are also lots of dark-skinned people who are not poor, and not just celebrities like Oprah, or professional athletes, or music stars. Caregivers, lawyers, doctors, businesspeople, and all kinds of workers come in all colors, too.

### What is prejudice? Why do people say and do bad things about and to other people that they don't even know?

Prejudice is having negative feelings or ideas about a whole group of people without really knowing or understanding very much about them. It is usually based on ignorance (not knowing), fear (they could hurt me or take things I have), hate (I don't like things about them), and sometimes our own insecurity (it makes me feel better to think I am better than them).

Are there times when someone teased you about your clothes, or your hair, or for just being a girl or a boy or for having a different skin color? Or maybe you were teased because you had different abilities and you couldn't do something. Or other children wouldn't let you play with them. Imagine feeling like that a lot of the time just because of the color of your skin.

There are people everywhere who are treated differently because they look or sound different, or have different abilities. But no one should be made to feel badly just because they look different.

### What is racism, and why does it happen?

Racism is treating another group of people badly because they look and act differently than you. Sometimes, it is a whole community, city, state, or country that treats a group badly. In the United States, because of a long history of slavery, segregation, and racism toward African Americans, we associate most racism with the attitudes and practices of white society toward people of African heritage who have brown or black skin. There has also been racism toward people from Central and South America with brown skin, Native Americans, Asians, and Southeast Asians. Racism also happens toward other groups around the world.

People also suffer from prejudice for reasons other than race. Sometimes religion or ethnicity is used to discriminate against people. Jewish people have had a long history of experiencing discrimination L Q P D Q \ F R X Q W U L H V , Q W K H 8 Q L W H G 6 W D W H V , U L V K \$ P H U L F D Q V D years ago, at least in part because they were Catholic. There are prejudiced and bigoted people in every social group who act badly toward people different from themselves.

There are many groups of people who are working to end prejudice and racism. They listen to people talk about their feelings, try to help others see that treating others badly is wrong, and make laws to stop people from treating others badly. Do you have any ideas how we can end racism?

## Why are some of the people on television so angry?

In a terrible disaster, you go through a lot. You may not have enough to eat or drink. You are tired. You might be scared and uncertain of what is going to happen next. You might have to wait and wait and wait for any kind of help, or wait a long time to simply know what is going on. You wonder if help is even coming. Sometimes you get so frustrated that you get angry, even at those who are trying to help you. Sometimes you feel that the people in charge of helping you don't know what they are doing or just aren't trying hard enough. Television shows angry people because it is more dramatic than showing people who are coping without anger or are more resigned. Have you ever been so frustrated that you got angry?

## Why are some of the people on television so sad?

In all crises and disasters, people are scared and may have suffered terrible losses. They may have lost someone they love, their pet, their house, or even their whole neighborhood. They may not know what they will do now or how they will live tomorrow. What will happen to them?

:H K R S H W K D W P R V W S H R S O H Z L O O J H W K H O S V R W K D W W K H L U I X W their fears did not come true 0 70003>JTJ /TT0 1 Tf 0 -1.2>8 (her Tf 0 hes 8 0 76 (ars did n2c1 Tf 0 -1.)10 (t wii8005

## How Can We Feel Safe and Be Safe? (for Families)

Children who have experienced a disaster, directly or indirectly, need reassurance that they will be safe. They have learned that nature is terrifyingly powerful. Now they need to know that no hurricane, uRRG WRUQDGR RU HDUWKTXDNH LV OLNHO\ WR KDUP WKHP LI WK to feel in control and powerful through their own efforts and through those of the competent adults around them. The key to both feeling safe and being safe is to be prepared. The more that even very young children are involved in the process of planning safety efforts, the more they will see natural

the 1980s, and the 1990s. The 1980s were characterized by a focus on the individual and the family, with a strong emphasis on self-help and personal responsibility. The 1990s saw a shift towards a more systemic approach, recognizing the influence of social and cultural contexts on individual behavior. This period was marked by a growing awareness of the need for community support and the role of social networks in mental health recovery.

In the 2000s, the focus shifted further towards a holistic approach, emphasizing the integration of mental health care with physical health, education, and employment. This period saw the emergence of recovery-oriented care, which prioritizes the individual's goals and preferences in treatment. The 2010s and 2020s have seen a continued emphasis on recovery, with a growing emphasis on self-help and peer support, reflecting a broader cultural shift towards self-empowerment and personal growth.

The evolution of recovery-oriented care has been shaped by a variety of factors, including advances in research, changes in policy, and shifts in public opinion. The recognition of the importance of social and cultural contexts in mental health recovery has led to a greater emphasis on community support and the role of social networks. The growing awareness of the need for holistic care has led to a greater emphasis on the integration of mental health care with physical health, education, and employment.

The future of recovery-oriented care lies in continued research and innovation, as well as a continued emphasis on self-help and peer support. The growing awareness of the need for holistic care and the importance of social and cultural contexts in mental health recovery will continue to shape the future of recovery-oriented care. The emphasis on self-help and peer support will likely continue to grow, reflecting a broader cultural shift towards self-empowerment and personal growth.

Recovery-oriented care is a powerful approach to mental health care that emphasizes the individual's goals and preferences in treatment. It recognizes the importance of social and cultural contexts in mental health recovery and the need for holistic care. The future of recovery-oriented care lies in continued research and innovation, as well as a continued emphasis on self-help and peer support.

The evolution of recovery-oriented care has been shaped by a variety of factors, including advances in research, changes in policy, and shifts in public opinion. The recognition of the importance of social and cultural contexts in mental health recovery has led to a greater emphasis on community support and the role of social networks. The growing awareness of the need for holistic care has led to a greater emphasis on the integration of mental health care with physical health, education, and employment.

# Helping Children Grow and Thrive

What Those Who Work With Children Can Do

Treat parents as partners.

**Work with families:**

f 7





f Use books, the media, and the Internet to explore the world of nature and environmental issues

f & KL 0 Q U Z K R KHOS SURWHFW WKHPVHOYHV DQG WKHLU IDPLOLHV  
natural disasters.

f Childr en and adults who recognize they can support others in crisis and provide time, energy, or material resources to help.

When the winds are howling, when the noise is deafening and the darkness grows, or when the ground shakes or opens up, children need all the shelter and light that we can bestow upon them. We need to always remember that children have the strength and goodness within them to make the world a better place in the future.

# PART III: Supporting Professional Caregivers through Crisis\*

7KH IROORZLQJ VHFWRQ ZDV ZULWWHQ VSHFL\FDOO\ IRU WHDFKHU and other professional caregivers. It offers strategies for supporting their emotional well-being during times of crisis.

Emotionally healthy staff are at the heart of strong, effective programs. We can't expect caregivers and others to create a warm, nurturing environment for children when they are struggling with powerful emotions. They simply can't give something they don't have. This section offers some perspective and information on how to support staff through grief.

## The Unique Needs of Professional Caregivers

## Constant Change

Perhaps more than any other industry, caregivers work in an environment of constant change. Children and families enroll and depart. Children move to new classrooms or new schools. Staff turnover tends to be higher than in other industries. All these realities can cause stress and grief for staff, but are rarely acknowledged.

\*The term professional caregiver refers to anyone who cares for children professionally, including teachers, therapists, clinicians, medical personnel, social workers, and others, rather than parents, grandparents, families, and guardians.

## Creating a Safe Place for Professional Caregivers

Acknowledging and talking about these challenges goes a long way in diffusing some of the stress that fosters healthy emotional expression for caregivers.

## What to Do

### Build Community

Child care centers, clinics, and schools are inherently different than many workplaces. We are in the business of dealing with human relationships and emotions, day in and day out. Caregivers need and deserve a warm, comfortable environment just as much as the children do. By building a strong sense of community in the setting **before**

**The culture and environment can either nurture staff**

## When an Employee Suffers a Loss

- f Respond immediately.** Reach out to an employee as soon as you learn of a loss, such as an illness, death, or other trauma. Express sympathy and ask what you can do to help. Listen to the employee and respect his or her wishes, particularly around disclosing the loss to others. Send FRQGROHQFHV VXFk DV uRZHUV RU D QRWH &RQWLQXH WR FKH few weeks since David died. How are you doing?”
- f Avoid making assumptions.** Grieving doesn't unfold in a neat, orderly timeline. Don't assume that an employee should be “over” his or her grief. For most people, the pain of grief lessens ZLWK WLPH EXW WKH ORVV QHYHU OHDYHV .HHS WKH GRRU WR employee might not perform at his or her usual level initially. Be patient and sensitive. Talk about possible solutions. For example, perhaps another teacher could lead group times or perform other tasks that require high energy or lots of interaction with others.
- f Navigate workplace changes.** Immediately after a loss, an employee might need time off. Going forward, continue to check in with the employee. Watch for signs that he or she needs additional support, such as frequent absences or tardiness, loss of interest in work, or reduced performance. Step in sooner rather than later. Encourage the employee to use the resources available through human resources.
- f Recognize the impact on staff members.** When an employee experiences the death of a family member or other loved one, your immediate concern will be for that employee. Don't forget, though, that depending on the closeness of their relationship, other employees might be DIIHFWHG WRR <RX WRR PLJKW tQG \RXUVHOI JULHYLQJ ZLWK GLItFXOW DUH SUHVHQW EHFDXVH \RXRYH GHYHORSHG FORVH staff cares about one another. Focus on nurturing those relationships and providing comfort.

## When an Employee Is Ill

When an employee becomes seriously ill, the entire community will probably be impacted. You and your staff might feel intense grief, wonder how to help, or worry about how these changes will affect your team. It's important to allow yourself — and your staff — to grieve and nurture each other while continuing to take care of the children and other daily responsibilities. Below are a few ideas:

- f Expect a variety of reactions and emotions.** Depending on the intimacy of your relationships, you and your employees may feel intense sadness or concern.
- f Respect the sick person's privacy.** Your employee must decide how much information he or she wants to share with others regarding the illness. Communicate clearly so you understand the employee's wishes. Always ask for permission before you share information.
- f Consider workload changes.** Your employee might need to take time off from work or be

f **Ask how to help.** Talk with the employee about how the team can best support him or her. For example, after a surgery or treatment, an employee might feel overwhelmed by lots of visitors or emails, but appreciate a few cards, a dinner, or a gift card for food. Continue to invite the HPSOR\HH WR VRFLDO HYHQWV VXFK DV D KROLGD\ SDUW\ .HHS work. Encourage team members to keep in touch through emails, phone calls, or short visits as appropriate, perhaps assigning one person as a single contact point.

# Resources

For an updated annotated list of resources and more information on helping children cope with tragedy, visit [www.brighthorizons.com](http://www.brighthorizons.com).

## Disaster and Crisis

### [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics is a comprehensive source for information related to helping children cope with disaster.

### [apa.org/helpcenter/](http://apa.org/helpcenter/)

American Psychological Association offers numerous resources on a variety of topics.

### <https://www.childtrauma.org/>

Information and resources to help improve the lives of traumatized and maltreated children.

### [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

The U.S. Department of Education has current information on education related topics.

### <https://www.mercycorps.org/>

An international relief and development organization whose website provides information on programs all over the world and shows how to get help, give, share grief, and support children.

### [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

7KH 1DWLRQDO \$OOLDQFH RQ 0HQWDO +HDOWK KDV D ZLGH YDULHW adults.

### [www.nationalcouncil.org](http://www.nationalcouncil.org)

The National Council for Behavioral Health offers mental health support and resources.

### [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)

The National Education Association's [School Crisis Guide](#) is a substantive resource for dealing with school crisis.

### [www.redcross.org/](http://www.redcross.org/)

The American Red Cross provides emergency relief and immediate response to disasters. The website includes a wealth of suggested materials for children and caregivers regarding disasters, and avenues for volunteerism or assistance.

### <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/FS702/>

Rutgers University provides suggestions on helping children recover from crisis or disaster.

### <https://www.trynova.org/>

The National Organization for Victim Assistance provides resources and service information for victims of crimes and crises.



## Children's Websites

[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration site where children can learn about and test their knowledge of natural disasters. Ages 8 and up

[www.timeforkids.com](http://www.timeforkids.com)

A current events online magazine that offers age-appropriate news coverage. Ages 6-12

## Books for Adults

(PRWLRQDO 5HFRYHU\ \$IWHU 1DWXUDO 'LVDVWHUV +RZ WR \*HW %D information for victims of natural disasters and the people who work with them.

## Children's Books

, .QRZ :KDW WR 'R \$ .LGRV \*XLGH WR 1DWXUDO 'LVDVWHUV %RQQLH Chesworth. Facts about disasters and information on how to prepare for and survive a disaster. Age 6 and up

5LYHU )ULHQGO\ 5LYHU :LOG -DQH .XUW] 1DUUDWLYH SRHPV DERXV \*UDQG )RUNV 1RUWK 'DNRWD uRRGV +HOSV FKLOGUHQ XQGHUVWDC FRODERUDWLRQ \$JHV

7KH 0DJLF 6FKRRO %XV ,QVLGH D +XUULFDQH 0DJLF 6FKRRO %XV 6 Children look inside the eye of a hurricane. Ages 4-8

## On Weather

<https://www.educationworld.com/>

A great site for caregivers with ideas and classroom activities in response to current events such as natural disasters.

## Children's Websites

[www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/)

An interactive website where children can explore the world of nature, animals, history, space, and science. Ages 6-13

[www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration site where children can learn about and test their knowledge of natural disasters. Ages 8 and up

[www.climatekids.nasa.gov](http://www.climatekids.nasa.gov)

Engaging, age-appropriate information on weather and climate change. Ages 8 and up.

## Children's Books

'RZQ &RPHV WKH 5DLQ E\ )UDQNO\Q 0 %UDQOH\ \$ FRQFLVH HDV\ W  
water is recycled, clouds are formed, and why we have rain and hail. Grades 2-4

)ODVK &UDVK 5XPEOH DQG 5ROO by Franklyn Branley. Facts about weather and the causes of  
IHZ VLP SOH H[SHULPHQWV DERXW ZHDWKHU \*UDGHV .

+XUULFDQH by Gail Gibbons

## On Children and Stress

Harvard University Center on the Developing Child: [Toxic Stress](#)

7KH 0D\R &OLQLF [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#)

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: [Types of Trauma](#)

## On Grief and Loss

[www.childtrauma.org](http://www.childtrauma.org)

Provides information and resources to help improve the lives of traumatized and maltreated children.

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

The Dougy Center, the National Center for Grieving Children and Families, provides support and training nationally and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children in grief.

## Books for Adults

3DUHQWLQJ WKURXJK &ULVLV +HOSLQJ .LGV LQ 7LPHV RI /RVV \*UL  
6XJJHVWLRQV WR KHOS SDUHQWV VXSSRUW FKLOGUHQ WKURXJK GL

## Children's Books

### Books for Children Preschool - Age 8:

7KH ,QYLVLEOH 6WULQJ E\ 3DWULFH .DUVW LV D EHDXLIXO VLP  
children the message that "people who love each other are always connected by a very special string made of love." This book explores separation as a universal theme. Use it to help children understand all types of separation, from going to school to going to bed to the death of a loved one.

1DQD 8SVWDLUV DQG 1DQD 'RZQVWDLUV, by Tomie dePaola, recounts de Paola's childhood of his grandmother's death. The book addresses the subject in simple terms (ie. explains the term "died" as meaning someone won't be there anymore), and shows the process of a child struggling to understand what it means to lose someone he loves.

:KHQ 'LQRV DXUV 'LH \$ \*XLGH WR 8QGHUVWDQGLQJ 'HDWK E\ /DXUL  
explains in simple language the feelings people may have regarding the death of a loved one and  
offers suggestions to honor the memory of someone who has died. This book has a simple glossary of  
ZRUGV ZLWK HDVLO\ XQGHUVWDQGDEOH GHtQLWLRQV

7KH )DOO RI )UHGGGLH WKH /HDI \$ 6WRU\ RI /LIH IRU \$OO \$JHV, by Leo B  
adults alike, illustrating the delicate balance between life and death as Freddie the Leaf changes with  
the passing seasons and the coming of winter.

% DGJHURV 3DUWLQJ \*LIWV, by Susan Varley. Badger's friends are sad when Badger dies. They re  
that he lives on through their memories of his kindness and goodness. By the spring, Badger's friends  
are beginning to heal.

7KH 7HQWK \*RRG 7KLQJ \$ERXW %DUQH\ E\ -XGLWK 9LRUVW 0\ FDW  
0\ PRWKHU VDLG ZH FRXOG KDYH D IXQHUDO IRU KLP DQG , VKRXO  
so I could tell them... A small boy loved his cat Barney and can only think of nine good things. With his  
father's help, he discovers the tenth good thing and begins to understand about the cycle of life and  
coping with loss20049>-24 ss20049>-24 sss o10 <005700030025004400 0003460044>10 4A00480057 U\ 0 P

IWHU WKH )XQHUDO  
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7 KH 0 H P R U \ 6 W U L Q J by Eve Bunting. Laura's memory string holds buttons: buttons from her mother's prom dress, wedding dress, and the nightgown she was wearing when she died. When the string breaks, Laura's stepmother, Jane, helps her search for a missing button. This beautifully illustrated story explores the process of celebrating the past, while accepting the present and future.

7 KH 3 X U S O H % D O O R R Q by Chris Raschka. A gentle, reassuring book for seriously ill children and the people who love and care for them.

## Books for Children Ages 6 - 12:

, : L V K , & R X O G + R O G < R X U + D Q G \$ & K L O G R V \* X L G H W R \* U L H I D Q G /  
comforting book gently helps grieving children identify their feelings and learn to accept and deal with them, discovering that it is normal and natural to feel the pain of loss.

0 L F K D H O 5 R V H Q R V 6 D G % R R N E \ 0 L F K D H O 5 R V H Q D Q G 4 X H Q W L Q % O D  
R I W K H D X W K R U R V J U L H I R Y H U W K H O R V V R I K L V P R W K H U D Q G V R Q  
overwhelming sadness and despair that can follow loss, but it also gives insight into the sparks of joy and optimism that memories can bring.

## On Homelessness

[www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)

7 KH 1 D W L R Q D O \$ O O L D Q F H W R ( Q G + R P H O H V V Q H V V L V D Q R Q S U R t W I  
W K H Q R Q S U R t W S X E O L F D Q G S U L Y D W H V H F W R U V R I V R F L H W \ L Q D Q

[www.homesforthehomeless.com](http://www.homesforthehomeless.com)

The Institute for Children and Poverty evaluates strategies and offers innovative approaches to combat the effects of homelessness.

[www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org](http://www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org)

+ R U L ] R Q V I R U + R P H O H V V & K L O G U H Q L V D 0 D V V D F K X V H W W V E D V H G F  
of homeless children and their families.

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

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth serves as the voice for the education of homeless children, connecting educators, parents, advocates, and service providers, to ensure school success.

<https://nationalhomeless.org/>

The National Coalition for the Homeless works to end homelessness through grassroots organizing, education, advocacy, technical assistance, and partnerships.

<https://serve.uncg.edu/>

The National Center for Homeless Education provides research, resources, and information enabling communities to address the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

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: K D W + D S S H Q H G W R 0 < : R U O G " Helping Children Cope with Natural Disaster and Catastrophe is a resource for parents, caregivers, and anyone working with children.

: K D W + D S S H Q H G W R 0 < : R U O G was written to help adults peer into the minds of children from infancy through the teenage years, and understand their confusion, fears, grief, and struggles to understand why the forces of nature can suddenly disrupt or destroy the world as they know it. It is to help both parents and caregivers understand the circumstances that lead to these events. It is to help both parents and caregivers understand the circumstances that lead to these events.

Extraordinary events like these test us all as citizens and human beings sharing a planet. They test us as parents, both as guardians of our children trying to keep them emotionally safe, and as our children's caregivers trying to raise them to become enlightened and empathetic adults. Children grow into the kind of people they will become at least in part by how we guide them through their questions, concerns, and fears, and whether we use the teachable moments thrust upon us to provide them with support, care, and guidance.

## About the original author

The late Jim Greenman was Senior Vice President for Education and Program Development at Bright Horizons Family Solutions, the world's leading provider of employer-sponsored early care and education. He is the author of *Helping Children Cope with Natural Disaster and Catastrophe* and *Helping Children Cope with Natural Disaster and Catastrophe* and numerous other books and articles.



Early Education &

