



Helping Children after a Natural Disaster – Helpful Tips for Educators

As students return to campus this week, many will need emotional support. Please utilize the following tips to better assist students as they transition back to school.

Possible Reactions:

- Shock
- Crying
- Confusion
- Anger
- Sadness
- Grief

Elementary Aged Children:	Adolescent Aged Children:
Irritability/Aggressiveness	Sleeping and eating disturbances
Physical complaints (headaches, stomachache, loss of appetite)	Physical complaints (headaches, stomachache, rashes, weight gain/loss)
Poor concentration	Poor concentration
Withdrawal from activities	Delinquent/risky behavior
Regressive behaviors (thumb-sucking, bedwetting, sleeping with parents)	Decreased energy level
Decreased verbalization (stuttering, speech problems)	Unwillingness to discuss the trauma
School avoidance (refusal to be left alone)	Agitation/Increase in conflicts

What can you do for your students?

- Allow for brief opportunity at beginning of class to share experiences (5-10 minutes)
- Establish safety and control
- Maintain routines
- Accept all reactions
- Offer comfort
- Speak calmly and reassuringly
- Consider limitations when assigning homework and grades
- Consider referral when a student exhibits significant/extreme symptoms

What can you do for yourself?

- Take care of personal and family needs
- Acknowledge your reaction to recent disaster-related events
- Seek additional support for personal needs
- Texas Association of School Psychologists resource link: <http://www.txasp.org/>

Please contact your campus counselor for additional support for students and staff.



Helping Children after a Natural Disaster – Helpful Tips for Parents

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, you may find your child in need of emotional support. Please utilize the following tips to better assist your child as he/she transitions back to school.

Possible Reactions:

- Shock
- Crying
- Confusion
- Anger
- Sadness
- Grief

Elementary Aged Children:	Adolescent Aged Children:
Irritability/Aggressiveness	Sleeping and eating disturbances
Physical complaints (headaches, stomachache, loss of appetite)	Physical complaints (headaches, stomachache, rashes, weight gain/loss)
Poor concentration	Poor concentration
Withdrawal from activities	Delinquent/risky behavior
Regressive behaviors (thumb-sucking, bedwetting, sleeping with parents)	Decreased energy level
Decreased verbalization (stuttering, speech problems)	Unwillingness to discuss the trauma
School avoidance (refusal to be left alone)	Agitation/Increase in conflicts

What can you do for your child?

- Encourage your child to talk and listen to their concerns
- Calmly provide factual information about the disaster-related events
- Encourage your children to be sensitive to the needs of others
- Validate feelings of sadness, stress or grief
- Maintain a normal routine as much as possible
- Offer comfort with gentle words, hugs and spending time together
- Encourage children to participate in recreational activities

What can you do for yourself?

- Address your own trauma in a healthy way (avoid yelling, hitting, isolating, abandoning, blaming)
- Seek encouragement from family, friends, clergy

Most importantly, please remember that each child is different. Signs and symptoms of distress after a disaster may not appear immediately and recovery may take weeks, months or even years for some children.

Please contact your child's school counselor for additional support.



Helping Families after a Natural Disaster – Helpful Resources

Immediate Assistance: Shelter, meals, mental health, medical and financial assistance

- American Red Cross
 - 1-800-866-526-8300
 - Choose Option 3
- Salvation Army
 - 1-800-SAL-ARMY (1-800-725-2769)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
 - www.fema.gov
 - 1-800-621-3362
- United Way of Greater Houston
 - 713-685-2300
- Houston Food Bank
 - 832-369-9390

Counseling Assistance:

- Medical Health Services Locator
 - 1-800-789-2647
 - www.samhsa.gov
- Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator
 - 1-800-662-4357
 - www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov
- The Harris Center
 - 713-970-7000

Animal Assistance:

- Houston Humane Society
 - 713-433-6421
- Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)
 - 713-869-7722

Please contact your child's school counselor for additional resources.