

You may want additional support. If so, contact one of the following community supports:

- ◆ Your local church
- ◆ Your local school guidance counselor
- ◆ A hospital human service department
- ◆ A local support group

or

- ◆ Counseling services:



Our local licensed providers:

Mercer County Behavioral
Health Commission, Inc.
Central Intake Office

(724) 662-2230

Catholic Charities

(724) 346-4142

Community Counseling Center (724) 981-7141

Assisting **A CHILD**



in Trauma

- A Guide for Parents -



Mercer County Behavioral
Health Commission, Inc.
8406 Sharon-Mercer Road
Mercer, PA 16137
Phone: (724) 662-1550
Emergency No.: (724) 662-2227
Email: mcbhc@mercercountybhc.org

What is Trauma?

An emotional injury—involving the creation of emotional memories, which arise through a long-lasting effect on structures deep within the brain.

The more direct the exposure to the traumatic event the higher the risk for emotional harm.

All children and adolescents exposed to violence or a disaster should be watched for signs of emotional distress.

Reactions to Trauma

Reactions to trauma may appear immediately after the traumatic event or days and even weeks later.

- ◇ Shock Fear
- ◇ Anger Sadness
- ◇ Shame Guilt



The impact of a traumatic event is likely to be greatest in the child or adolescent who previously has been the victim of child abuse or some other form of trauma, or who already had a mental health problem. The youngest child who lacks family support is more at risk for a poor recovery.

Helping the Child or Adolescent Trauma Victim

After trauma occurs, the family is the first-line resource for helping. Among the things that parents and caring adults can do are:



- ◇ Explain the episode of violence or disaster as well as you are able;
- ◇ Encourage children to express their feelings without passing judgment;
- ◇ Inform children that it is normal and ok to feel upset; but not appropriate to take out anger on others;
- ◇ Allow time to heal wounds, however a gradual return to routine can be reassuring to the child;
- ◇ Reassure them of your love and support;
- ◇ Reassure them that the traumatic event was not their fault;
- ◇ Allow children to cry or be sad. Don't expect them to be brave and tough; and
- ◇ Take care of yourself so you can take care of your children.