

What you can do about it

- Provide honest, age-appropriate information about the event
- Encourage discussion of the event emphasising realistic expectations of what could have been done
- Encourage acceptance, provide support networks and encourage an understanding of emotional responses
- Provide information on safe ways of relieving emotional feelings and discomfort
- Encourage postponing significant life decisions
- Link obvious changes in behaviour to the impact of event
- Acknowledge the significance of event
- Help to retain positive memories

For further information

If you have any doubts or concerns about children or your responsibilities regarding their support and care, you can seek support and information from the following:

Dundee Educational Psychology Service (DEPS)

St Ninian's Primary School
Dochart Terrace
Dundee DD2 4HB
Tel: 01382 432980

Barnardo's Scotland Rollercoaster Service

Dryburgh Resources Centre
Napier Drive
Dundee DD2 2TF
Tel: 01382 436621

We can provide this information in large print or in another format that meets your needs.

Chinese	欲知詳情，請致電：01382 431563
Russian	Более подробную информацию можно получить позвонив по телефону: 01382 431563
Urdu	مزید معلومات کے لئے براہ مہربانی 01382 431563 پر فون کریں۔
Polish	po dalszą informację zadzwoń pod numer 01382 431563
Other formats	For more information please phone 01382 434503.



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A guide for adults caring for children following a critical incident or bereavement

Dundee
City Council
Education
CHANGING
FOR THE FUTURE

Barnardo's
Scotland
BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

What is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident is usually a sudden event likely to cause an experience of significant personal distress or traumatic symptoms.

Common Reactions

Reactions to traumatic events arise out of a reduced sense of safety and security and can be considered under the following headings:

Feelings

- Feeling self conscious of being labelled abnormal
- Feeling scared & vulnerable
- Experiencing mood swings
- Re-experiencing earlier traumas or feelings of loss

Thinking

- Recall of vivid disturbing images
- Problems with memory
- Poor concentration
- Confused thinking about the event
- Need to repeatedly go over details of the event

Behaviour

- Decreased school performance
- Seeking more attention than usual
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Separation difficulties and safety fears
- Truancy
- Needing to conform with peers in response to the event

Emotions

- Fear and anxiety - of cracking up, or that the same thing could happen again
- Shame - at not being able to cope or being emotional
- Longing - for everything to return to normal
- Guilt - at not having been able to prevent what happened, or being less affected than others
- Anger - at the injustice or at people treating the event lightly

Physical

- Headaches
- Aches and pains
- Tightness in chest
- Nausea
- Tiredness and sleep problems
- Tearfulness

Bereavement, Loss and Grief

A traumatic event may, or may not, result in a death (bereavement) nevertheless, the effect of such an event will be about loss.

Bereavement generates a range of emotions, and can have an impact on our physical wellbeing and on our thinking. Children will also experience grief and many will express it through their behaviour. It is important to remember that grieving is a process rather than an event.

Most of the behaviours listed in this leaflet are short-term and disappear within a short period. If the behaviour persists, it may be useful to speak with someone familiar with this area of work.