

When to seek further help

We all have natural ways of coping when a critical incident happens.

Many parents worry about their children and they sometimes feel they should seek professional help immediately after the death or event.



Intervening **too** early may disrupt these normal coping skills but sometimes specialised help is necessary. If, after 4—6 weeks, your child is experiencing any of the difficulties described, do seek further help.

Your child's school will provide information on what other help is available or you may wish to arrange an appointment with your child's GP in the first instance.

Here are some signs which might mean your child may need additional help and support:

- If they feel they cannot handle the intensity of their feelings or reactions.
- If their normal ways of coping are not working for them .
- If they do not seem to be moving on with life as soon as you would have expected.
- If there is no one they can talk to about how they are feeling.

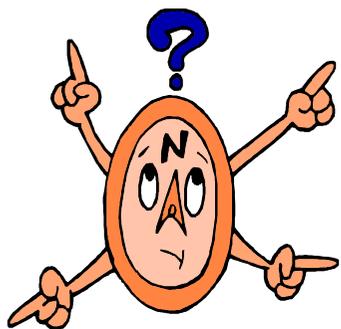


Produced by :
Critical Incident Response Team

When Critical Incidents Happen!



What parents and carers can do to help!



Each individual's experience to a critical incident can differ. This leaflet may help you as parent/carer to understand your child's reaction in similar situations.

It will also show you how you can help **normal healing** to happen.

This will take time.

Normal feelings and emotions in response to traumatic events may include:

- Shock, denial, sadness, anger, fear, guilt, despair and anxiety or appearing not to be feeling anything at all.

Your child may also feel tired, lack concentration, be unable to sleep and may experience other physical symptoms, such as nausea, headaches, feeling cold and loss of appetite.

The event may trigger memories of other losses in your child's life.

Some may display avoidance behaviour by keeping busy or appearing reluctant to talk about what has happened.

Things you can do to help!

With the understanding and support of loved ones, these reactions usually pass more quickly. However, it is important to accept that things just can't be made better in a short space of time.

- ✓ Listen to what your child is saying

- ✓ Talk to your child using words and language he/she will understand
- ✓ Answer any questions honestly and simply and remember it is OK to say - "I don't know"

Other things that might help them!

- ✓ Try a relaxation activity such as deep breathing
- ✓ Take some exercise
- ✓ Listen to music
- ✓ Take part in an activity with friends/family
- ✓ Identify support networks eg friends, family, school, community
- ✓ Talk to someone you trust
- ✓ Contact other support services

