



## Supporting Your Child After a Crisis

### Know the Symptoms:

Acute stress reactions can occur 3 days to one month after a distressing event or crisis. Symptoms include:

- Anxiety, negative mood, irritability, mood swings, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating, and withdrawal
- Distressing dreams or flashbacks, hypervigilance, and exaggerated startle response
- Avoidance of situations that may trigger memories of the distressing event
- Feeling numb or detached
- Physical signs such as a racing heart, nausea or stomach pain, tight chest or difficulty breathing, headaches, etc.

### How to Support Your Child or Teen:

- Provide a safe space for them to talk
- Ensure they are taking care of their physical health – drinking water, eating, and sleeping, though sleep and appetite may be disturbed
- Help them identify a safe place to go at school if they are experiencing stress or anxiety
- Let teachers and coaches know what is going on and work with them to create temporary accommodations as necessary

### When to Get Help:

- If symptoms persist for longer than a month
- If you notice your child withdrawing from friends and family
- If you notice significant decreases in your child's grades or extracurricular involvement
- If symptoms create significant impairment in day-to-day functioning
- If your child is having thoughts of hurting themselves or someone else

*The Center's 45+ therapists and psychologists provide counseling and psychological services that help children, teens, and adults gain insight, learn, and grow through life's changes and challenges.*

*15 office locations across North and Central Texas,  
from McKinney to Waco and Garland to Arlington*

