

BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. E-NEWS

Helping Children Cope with Disaster

Tornados, floods and other natural disasters are not easy for anyone to comprehend or accept, especially children. Fortunately, most kids, even those exposed to trauma, are quite resilient. To support their hardiness, consider the following suggestions to help them cope with stressful events and experiences and reduce the risk of lasting emotional difficulties.

- **Keep your emotions in check.** After a disaster, they will look to you for help. How you react gives them clues on how to act. If you react with alarm, they may become more scared. If you seem overcome with a sense of loss, they may feel her losses more strongly.
- **Immediately after the disaster, focus on your child's emotional needs.** Although feelings of fear are natural and healthy emotions, try to reduce fear and anxiety by asking them what's at the forefront of their mind.
- **Create an open and supportive environment.** Children should feel that they can ask questions. At the same time, it's best not to force them to talk about things unless they're ready. When they do talk, acknowledge and validate their thoughts, feelings and reactions. Take it seriously and let them know that you think their questions and concerns are important and appropriate.



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Never Pay Full Price Again

With smart planning and a little research, you may never have to pay full price again — for anything. Not only do specific items go on sale at certain times each year, the internet can give you a boost by offering even more money-saving opportunities.

When it comes to travel expenses, several websites can reduce costs. GasBuddy.com provides gasoline prices at filling stations in your zip code. Kayak.com searches well-known travel sites (like Expedia or Priceline) to help save time and money on airfare, rental cars and hotels.

For everyday items, such as groceries and toiletries, click on Coupons.com after making a list. Thousands of new coupons are uploaded each day; and when combined with advertised sales, you can save a bundle on necessities.

For other items, Consumer Reports compiled a calendar detailing times when certain items are typically marked down. Here's a sampling:

January: bedding, treadmills

February: humidifiers, electronics

March: computers, winter coats

April: cameras, spring clothing

May: athletic shoes, telephones

June: indoor furniture, sports gear

July: outdoor furniture, swimwear

August: air conditioners

September: bicycles, plants

October: winter wear

November: toys, baby products

December: appliances, clothing Ψ



Love Your Library

Just because school is out for summer doesn't mean you have to stop learning. Libraries across the country organize summer reading programs that encourage people of all ages to beat summertime boredom with a good book. For more information, visit your local library and check out www.publiclibraries.com Ψ



Play Some Music – It's Good For You

Music may have charm to soothe a savage beast, as William Congreve wrote, but can it make us healthier?

Health.com reports that Dr. Michael Miller, a professor of medicine and director of the Center for Preventive Cardiology at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore, has observed that listening to "joyful" music can improve a person's blood flow, which may promote vascular health.

Music can also trigger endorphins (or similar compounds) within the brain to release nitric oxide, which makes blood vessels dilate, reduces inflammation, stops platelets from sticking and may lower cholesterol. Music is also known to relieve stress, which can result in better health overall. Ψ

"Man never made any material as resilient as the human spirit."

~ Bern Williams

Three Keys to Successful Communication

There are three communication techniques that can help you with everyday conversation and touchy topics. Asking questions, using "I" statements and being specific can help you create a win-win situation.



- **Find Out What's Going On.** Always ask questions instead of jumping to conclusions. "Did something happen to cause this project to be behind schedule?" gives the person an opportunity to explain any extenuating circumstances before you take action.
- **Defuse With "I" Messages.** Begin sentences with "I" instead of "you." For example, a sentence that begins "I need..." is easier for the other person to respond to positively, rather than "You did..." or "You shouldn't..." For example, "I need you to unload the dishwasher before you go out and play" is better than "You didn't unload the dishwasher like I told you."
- **Be Specific.** Details prevent misunderstandings and present facts that are hard to argue with. Saying "You're not working fast enough" leaves the person wondering what is fast enough. But if you say "You missed three deadlines last month, and that's not acceptable," the person understands your limits and knows what to do. Ψ



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- **Calmly and confidently explain the situation.** As best as you can, tell children what you know about the disaster. Explain what will happen next. For example, get down to youngster's eye level to talk and say, "Tonight we will all stay together in the shelter."
- **Give children honest answers and information.** They will usually know, or eventually find out, if you're "making things up," and it may affect their ability to trust you or your reassurance in the future. While being reassuring, don't make unrealistic promises like telling them that a natural disaster won't happen again.
- **Keep the family together.** While you look for housing and assistance, you may feel that it's better or easier to leave little ones with relatives or friends. One of children's biggest fears after a trauma is getting lost or being left behind. To reduce this anxiety, keep the family together as much as possible.
- **Include kids in recovery activities.** Give her chores that are her responsibility. This will help her feel that she is part of the recovery in getting the family back on its feet.
- **Don't let him watch too much television with frightening images.** The repetition of such scenes can be disturbing and confusing.
- **Monitor for physical symptoms including headaches and stomachaches.** Many young ones express anxiety through physical aches and pains. An increase in such symptoms without apparent medical cause may be a sign that a child is feeling anxious or overwhelmed.
- **Watch for signs that indicate the child should be evaluated by a mental health professional.** Signs include: ongoing sleep disturbances; intrusive thoughts or worries; recurring fears about death, leaving parents or going to school. If these behaviors persist, call Behavioral Health Systems, and talk with your Care Coordinator about scheduling an appointment for your child.



You can help children cope by understanding what causes their anxieties and fears. Reassure them with firmness and love. Your youngsters will realize that life will eventually return to normal. If children do not respond to the above suggestions, call BHS and talk with your Care Coordinator. Ψ

Chocorazz Smoothie

from www.mealsmatter.org (© 2011 Meals Matter)

Ingredients:

1 medium banana, sliced and frozen
1 cup fat free chocolate milk
½ cup raspberry low fat yogurt

Servings: 2

Prep time: less than 15 min

Cook time: less than 15 min

Instructions:

Place banana, chocolate milk and yogurt in blender. Cover and blend until smooth. Serve immediately.



Nutrition Information:

Calories: 172; Fat: 1g; Carbohydrates: 36g;
Protein: 7g; Fiber: 2g