

Information Sheet to Share with Parents

Helping Your Child After A Crisis:

Children may be especially upset and express feelings about the disaster. These reactions are normal and usually will not last long. Please note children may not be able to express their feelings about the disaster and may express them through alternative behavior patterns. Listed below are some behaviors you may see in your child:

- Excessive fear of darkness, separation, or being alone
- Clinging to parents, fear of strangers
- Worry
- Increase in immature behaviors
- Not wanting to go to school
- Changes in eating/sleeping behaviors
- Increase in either aggressive behavior or shyness
- Bed wetting or thumb sucking
- Persistent nightmares
- Headaches or other physical complaints

The following will help your child:

- Talk with your child about his/her feelings about the disaster; share your feelings too
- Talk about what happened; give your child information he/she can understand
- Reassure your child that they are safe; you may need to repeat this reassurance often
- Hold and comfort your child often
- Spend extra time with your child at bedtime
- Allow your child to mourn or grieve. If you feel your child is having problems at school, talk to his/her teacher, counselor or principal so you can work together to help him/her

Ongoing Recovery

Please reread this sheet from time to time in the coming months. Usually a child's emotional response to a crisis will not last long, but some problems may be present or recur for many months afterward. In such cases consideration should be given to making a referral to the community mental health center.