

November/December  
 2014

# SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

## Coping With Trauma

More than 25 percent of youth in America experience a serious traumatic event by the age of 16 with many suffering multiple and repeated traumas, according to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), an organization established by Congress in 2000.

A traumatic event is a scary, dangerous, or violent event. Despite a parent or caregiver's best efforts to keep children safe, harmful events still happen. These events may include:

- Accident/injury
- Serious Illness
- Homelessness
- Violence within the family
- Death of a loved one
- School violence
- Physical, Emotional or Sexual abuse
- Separation from parents

A first step in helping children and youth recover from traumatic



events is to learn as much as you can about child traumatic stress. Protective, nurturing, and effective parental and caregiver responses can have a positive effect in reducing symptoms of traumatic stress.

Other steps include:

- Encourage open communication
- Let them know how much you want to help
- Be patient and tolerant, offering understanding and reassurance.
- Be open to seeking professional help if needed.

**Caregiver support** is one of the most important factors in lessening a child's symptoms after experiencing a traumatic event.

### Possible Reactions to Child Traumatic Stress

- \*exhibits changes in behavior, school performance, eating and sleeping habits
- \*becomes upset for long periods of time, exhibits signs of depression and anxiety
- \*becomes withdrawn, does not want to take part in activities
- \*experiences aches and pains

### Resources on Trauma for Caregivers and Families

**National Child Traumatic Stress Network**  
[www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)  
 Offers information about child traumatic stress and how to help traumatized children.

**Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative**  
 Trauma-Informed Practice with Young People in Foster Care  
[www.jimcaseyouth.org/](http://www.jimcaseyouth.org/)

**Child Welfare Information Gateway**  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/>