

## Psychological Traumas and Children

### Definition

A psychological trauma is when someone is anxious, fearful, confused or hopeless as a result of a startling or frightening experience.

### What causes a psychological trauma for a child?

There are many causes, a few of which include natural disasters, a sudden serious illness, a death, a burglary, an accident or suffering physical abuse.



### What can we expect from a child who has been through a trauma?

- Time to recover and readjust.
- The need to be close to their parents and feel extra security.
- A need to talk about what happened or the opposite - withdrawal.
- Behavior regression.
- Fear of going to bed alone, difficulty falling asleep, nightmares etc.

### How can we help a child recover from a traumatic experience?

- As a parent, spend as much time as possible with your child immediately after the incident.
- Encourage your child to describe what happened and retell the story as much as necessary.
- Really listen to the child.
- Encourage the child to draw pictures about what happened.
- Give praise to the child for any good actions taken during the traumatic incident.
- Include the child in future prevention planning and preparation.
- As soon as possible, try to reestablish routines for the child.
- Be honest with the child about the factual information.
- Reassure the child in both words and actions that you are there for them and that they will be ok.

Parents are the most important people to assist our children in recovering from a traumatic incident.