

Coping with Trauma: How can Families be Supportive?

Your loved one has been through a traumatic incident. What can you do to help support them? Below are several suggestions for offering support and comfort during a trying time:

Listen

One of the most important needs after a trauma is to talk about the event – and to do so often. Talk about it over and over. It may be difficult for you to hear, or you may get tired of hearing the same old story, but talking is a crucial part of your loved one's recovery.

Be supportive and sympathetic, but try to avoid over-reacting. Your loved one needs to tell his or her story and not be upset by your reactions. If your loved one tries to shield you from the event by refusing to talk about it, you obviously cannot force him or her to talk. But, you can encourage openness and listen to whatever else the person wants to say.

Include the whole family in the healing process

You and your spouse /partner may feel you should protect your children from the upsetting event. But, they'll undoubtedly know something is wrong. This can be stressful for them too and they may need some help to get through it.

Take care of yourself

While it is important to be supportive, you also need to take care of yourself. Ask friends and family for help and don't be afraid to seek counselling for yourself if needed.

Enjoy the little things

Take time out for your family, have a special meal together or take small outings. Appreciating the little things won't make the pain go away, but will help in the healing process

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