

Supporting Children after a Traumatic Event

Critical events may be upsetting for children and teens. Parents and caregivers play a vital role in helping them feel safe, understood, and supported.

HOW CHILDREN MAY REACT

Children respond differently depending on their age, temperament, levels of exposure to the event or news and previous experiences. They may:

- Ask repeated questions about what happened
- Show worry, fear, or sadness
- Become clingy, irritable, or withdrawn
- Experience changes in sleep, appetite, or behaviour
- Mimic adult emotions or express them in play

TIPS FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN

- **Listen first** — Let them express feelings and ask questions without judgement
- **Use age-appropriate language** — Be honest, but avoid graphic details
- **Validate feelings** — Say things like “It’s normal to feel scared or sad”
- **Provide reassurance** — Emphasise safety and what is being done to protect them
- **Encourage questions** — It’s okay to admit if you don’t have all the answers
- **Limit exposure to media** — Too much news can increase anxiety

Children look to trusted adults for guidance and reassurance. Your presence, empathy, and calm support are the most important tools to help them navigate distressing events.

SUPPORT EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

- **Maintain routines** — Regular meals, school, and bedtime provide stability
- **Create safe spaces to talk** — Encourage open, ongoing conversations that are age appropriate and focus on the children’s emotional response rather than your own
- **Engage in calming activities** — Play, art, reading, or exercise
- **Model coping** — Children learn by seeing adults manage stress calmly
- **Monitor for prolonged distress** — Seek help if anxiety or sadness continues

WHEN TO SEEK EXTRA SUPPORT

Professional help may be needed if a child:

- Shows extreme fear or withdrawal
- Has trouble sleeping or eating for an extended period
- Exhibits aggressive behaviour or frequent tantrums
- Talks about self-harm or expresses hopelessness

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE



Scan the QR code to make a booking with a **Converge expert today**.



convergeinternational.com.au



1300 687 327

Converge
Care Anytime Anywhere