



BHS Medical Department

Helping Children Cope

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with a crisis calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Watch for Behaviour Changes in Your Child

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way.

Some common changes to watch for:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children.
- Returning to behaviours they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bed-wetting).
- Excessive worry or sadness.
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits.
- Irritability and “acting up” behaviours in teens.
- Poor school performance or avoiding school.
- Difficulties with attention and concentration.
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past.
- Unexplained headaches or body pain.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

Ways to Support Your Child

- Talk with your child.
- Answer questions and share facts in a way that your child can understand.
- Reassure your child that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn from you how to cope with stress.
- Limit your family’s exposure to stressful events. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. Create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.
- Spending time with your child in meaningful activities, reading together, exercising, playing board games.

Take Care of Your Mental Health

You may experience increased stress. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Always seek help if required.

Ref: CDC Centres for Diseases Control and Prevention.