



Tips & Lessons — Disaster Response

Tips for Parents in Helping Children and Youth Cope

These are tips for talking with young people in your family about disasters and in helping children to find resilience in overcoming stressful events in their communities and in the world. Although in the short term, children may show signs of stress, young people often are able to find resilience in responding to disaster situations.

TIPS FOR TALKING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

Be Honest

Do not sugar-coat a situation or tell a child “everything will be fine” unless you can realistically say this. Give your child age-appropriate information about what has happened without overdramatizing the situation.

Reassurance Is Key!

Tell your child that you will do everything you can to keep him or her safe, and that your family will stick together, no matter what.

Practice Patience

Children who have experienced disaster-related stress often regress in their development. Small children may even regress in their potty training. Outbursts or tantrums may occur. These are normal reactions. Be understanding and stay calm.

Social Interaction with Friends

Encourage teens and older children to check in with their friends. Social interaction with friends will help teens find comfort and stay connected with their peer group.



Dear Lord, be with us this day as we gather together to comfort and support each other. Help us to find your guiding words and presence in those around us. Help us find listening ears and kind words as we seek to bring our thoughts and prayers to You.

In Christ's Name, Amen.

Fast Facts



Read - Updates On How to Help

<http://www.facebook.com/EpiscopalRelief>

Print - Bulletin Inserts for Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund:

<http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/bulletin-insert-sandy-half-page.pdf>

Donate - Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund:

<http://www.er-d.org/donate-select.php>



Listen

Spend time listening to your child. Hold and hug your child. Tell your child how much you love him or her and that you will get through this situation together. Perform small acts of kindness and generosity.

Encourage Expression

Drawing a picture, telling a story, or acting out a drama may assist your child in emotionally coping with the disaster. Don't be judgmental of these expressions. Try to respond by asking the child to tell you about the picture or other artistic expression, and listen attentively. Encourage teens to write in journals, draw, or play music to express their emotions.

Turn Off the News

Turn off the television news to prevent overload of disturbing images. Also, monitor your child's conversations with other children and be prepared to gently correct misinformation.

Take Care of Yourself

You likely will need time to process and cope with the disaster yourself. If you can safely do so, allow another adult to care for your child while you give yourself time to seek support from others or just to attend to clean-up or paperwork resulting from the disaster. Consider swapping out babysitting duties with friends or neighbors.

Follow "Normal" Routines

Try to follow "normal" routines and daily schedules as much as you are able to give your child a sense of familiarity and security.

Pray

Pray with your children. Pray for your children. Practice your faith and model resilience in the face of hardship.

To Those In Sandy's Wrathful Path



As the waters recede,
As the embers from the fires cool,
As Sandy's winds abate and the sky
clears,
As the early morning sun lightens the
darkened cities,
Surely the presence of God is with you
in this time of destruction and grief,
And our thoughts and concerns for
your safety and recovery remain,
While our earnest prayers unite us.

--The CREDO Staff

Additional Resources



For more information on helping flood victims, please see the following online resources:

"Ministering to Children After a Disaster"

To learn more about what Episcopal Relief & Development is doing following Superstorm Sandy, see www.er-d.org/Hurricane-Sandy.