

What can you do to help your son or daughter after a traumatic experience?

Routines

Many families and young people have found great value in keeping to their usual routines. If your child has jobs around the house or elsewhere he or she may need you to be flexible about seeing them completed.

To Talk or not to talk

Give your son or daughter the message that they can talk about their thoughts and feelings to you but also allow them to choose when or if they do. Reassure them that having strong feelings is normal at this time. Sometimes young people prefer to talk to someone outside of the family. Be supportive and non-judgmental. Trauma can be experienced differently by each of us and all of these experiences are equally valid.

Support from others.

Encourage them to spend time with supportive friends. Talk to others who may be involved with your son or daughter (e.g. teachers) so that they understand how he or she has been affected and what they can do to help. Consult your son or daughter in this so that they feel they have some control in matters affecting them.

Activities

Encourage them to keep up social activities, hobbies or sports etc. This will help with managing stress and not dwelling too much on the traumatic experience.

Being Firm

Keep to your usual expectations of your son or daughter while allowing some flexibility for things that are less important. Set firm limits on behaviours that involve aggression or self-harm. Seek professional help for such behaviours.

Humour

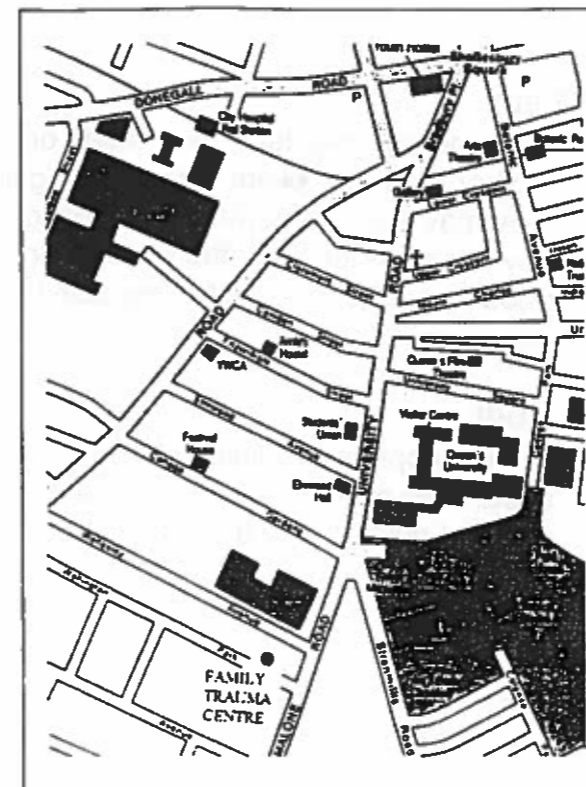
Feel okay to use humour when it is natural to do so. This can be a welcome way to lighten the situation.

Professional Help

Be aware of how your son or daughter is coping at home, in school and with friends. Seek professional help for any signs of depression, accident proneness, restlessness or persistent changes to personality.

Be Reassured

With time and care young people can make a full recovery from trauma. Treatment is available if they need it.



If you have any queries about the information contained in this leaflet, please contact:

THE FAMILY TRAUMA CENTRE

1 Wellington Park
Belfast, BT9 6DJ
Northern Ireland
Telephone: 028 9020 4700
Facsimile: 028 9020 4729
e-mail: ftc@sebt.n-i.nhs.uk



This leaflet and others in the Coping with Trauma series are available online at www.sebt.org



THE FAMILY TRAUMA CENTRE

Advice for parents of children who have experienced a traumatic event.

AGED 12-18 YEARS