

# Supporting yourself and your child following stressful events

It is normal for parents and caregivers to want to protect children and young people from events which may cause stress and trauma. At times, there will be events happening locally and across the world which have an impact on us all.

This information leaflet aims to provide practical tips you can take for yourself and to support your child. This information is based on the UK Trauma Council's 5 evidence-based principles of recovery; having a sense on safety, calm, connection, control and hope.

## Helping young people feel safe

It is normal for children to ask questions to help them make sense of the world, this is no different following a stressful event.

When sharing information with children it is helpful to ensure that the shared message is honest, accurate, reliable and in language which the child understands.

We know children need enough information so they aren't filling in the gaps with their imaginations and worst case scenarios. Similarly if questions are being asked and you are unsure of the answer, it's okay to say "We don't know yet - can I answer that one later once I know a bit more".

Being open and starting conversations allows your child to know that they can talk to you if they have seen or heard something distressing.



## A word on media

We can all recognise that we have seen news stories which generate more fear, whether they are accurate or not.

When a stressful event happens it is helpful to limit exposure to media sources, both the news and social media.

## Helping young people to feel calm

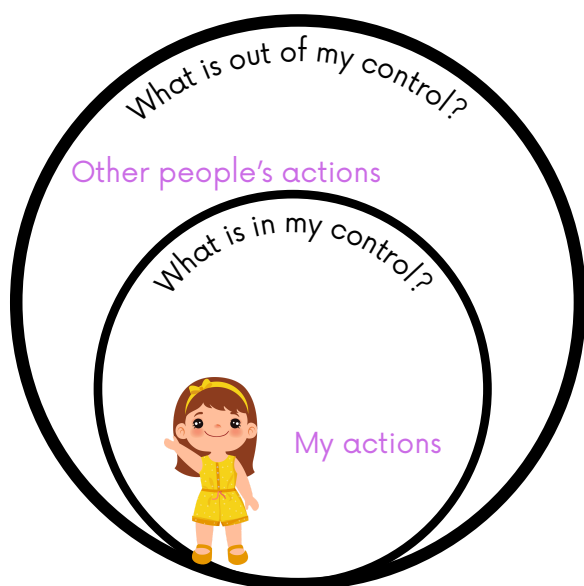
We all have emotional or physical reactions to events happening around us, is it important for ourselves and our children to recognise that these feelings are not dangerous and are a part of what makes us human. It is important that we are given time to have those feelings and aren't rushed to feel better.

You will likely already have a good understanding of what helps your child feel calm in response to big feelings and emotions, it can be helpful to remind your child of these.

## Helping young people feel connected

Some people may naturally isolate themselves following stressful events, however being around others is important.

You could support your child by planning things to do together or getting other friends and family involved to support.



## Helping young people feel in control

Feeling you have influence in your life and the world around you is a key factor in wellbeing. Encouraging your child's independence can help them to feel more in-control.

You could sit with your child to map out circles of control, supporting them to identify what they do have influence over.

## Helping young people to feel hopeful

When we are surrounded by a stressful event with a lot of news coverage, it is understandable to think about it a lot. While we don't want to minimise what is happening now, it is beneficial to think with your child about hopes for the future.



## Further information and support:

Guides for understanding and managing trauma for young people and for parents and caregivers. As well as a guide to managing anxiety in uncertain and challenging times. Produced by the Greater Manchester Resilience Hub. [www.penninecare.nhs.uk/trauma](http://www.penninecare.nhs.uk/trauma)

Young Minds – Information and advice on looking after yourself and your mental health. Contains information on symptoms, conditions, medication.

Also offer a parent helpline which can be accessed by calling 0808 802 5544 from 9:30am-4pm, Monday-Friday.

