

Facing My Friends and Fears After Injury

One day, I was burned while cooking dinner for my family. The oil caught fire and burned my face, neck, and arms. It was so painful! I was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. My mom couldn't stop crying.

The doctor told me I had second- and third-degree burns. I had surgery to replace the burned skin with new skin. After that, my body hurt all the time. It hurt just to lie in bed.

When the bandages came off and I looked in the mirror, I cried. I didn't even look like me! My skin was so ugly. I kept thinking, "Why did this happen to me?"



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A few weeks later, the doctor told me that I could go back to school. I began to worry about what people would think. In the hospital, other kids look like me, with scars and injuries. But back at school, it will be different. What if I get teased?

I went to a support group for kids like me with injuries. I learned that it's normal to feel upset about how I looked at first. Our group talked a lot about what makes us strong. We filled a treasure chest with words and pictures of our strengths. That helped me feel good about myself again.

In group, we also discussed our worries about going back to school. Everyone was nervous about being stared at and teased. The group leader asked us to "role play" with each other. It's just like acting. First, we pretended that we are being teased or stared at. Then, we came up with different ways to deal with it — like ignore it, crack a joke, or talk to friends. At first, it's pretty hard to do!

After some practice, it got easier to handle. I know that I look different on the outside, but I am still the same person on the inside. That makes me stronger. Now, I'm ready for anything!

A PARTNER IN
NCTSN

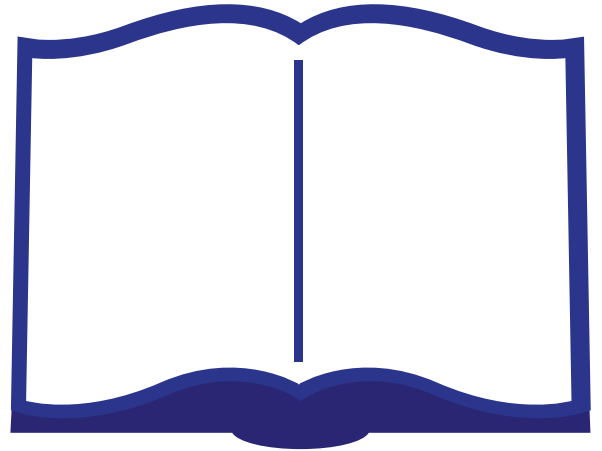
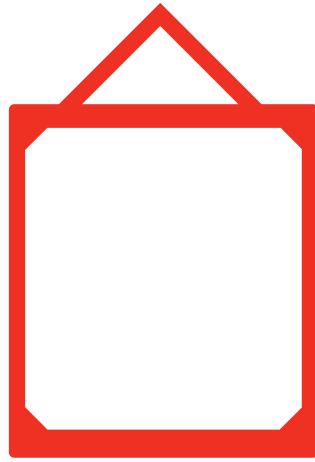
The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

TURN OVER FOR ACTIVITIES

Developed by The Center for Pediatric Traumatic Stress at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and Nemours / Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children



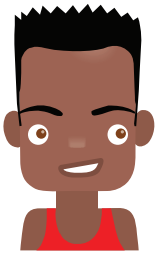
Write in each item the strengths you have that you would put in your treasure chest.



How do you answer when someone asks you about what happened?



Write in your answers:



I heard you went to the hospital! What happened?



What was the hardest part for you?



How can I help you?

