After the Injury: Helping Myself Cope

FOR PARENTS OF INJURED CHILDREN

Six ways to take care of yourself while you care for your injured child.

1. **Take time to take care of yourself.**
   Try to get enough sleep and eat regularly.

2. **Use your support system.**
   Talk with people you trust (family, friends, clergy, your doctor) about how you are feeling.

3. **Ask for practical help if you need it.**
   Let others know how they can best be of help to you and your family. Do you need meals? Child care?

4. **Try to keep (or get back to) normal routines.**
   It can be especially helpful to return to activities that you and your family enjoy.

5. **Be aware of your own feelings and reactions.**
   Some parents find it upsetting to talk with their child about what happened, or they feel anxious or overprotective when their child starts to return to normal activities. If this is true for you, be sure to get support for yourself so that you can best help your child.

6. **Watch out for problematic ways of dealing with stress.**

Are my reactions and feelings normal?

In the first few weeks, parents often feel upset, worried and more stressed. This is normal. Dealing with a sudden event and taking care of your child's physical injuries can be a difficult and unexpected disruption to day-to-day family life. These worries and stresses usually get better with a little time and with support from family and friends.

When and where should I get help?

- if your feelings make it hard to get back to (or enjoy) your usual activities,
- if you find it hard to talk with your child about what happened,
- if you seem to be getting worse rather that better, or
- if reactions that bother you last more than a month.

Your doctor, your clergyperson or your child's school counselor may be able to suggest a professional counselor or therapist in your area who can help.

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

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