

## **HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH CRISIS**

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1. Talk with your child calmly and patiently; provide simple explanations regarding the crises situation, give brief accurate answers to questions.
2. Listen to what your child has to say and how your child says it. Explore his or her feelings. Does the child display fear, anxiety, or insecurity? Try and help the child put his/her feelings into words. Use such phrases as "You are afraid that..." or "You wonder if..." This helps both you and the child clarify feelings.
3. Reassure your child that he /she is not alone and that you are there for him/her and that you will take care of him/her and that everything will be alright soon.
4. You may have to keep reiterating information and reassurances to your child many times. Just because you told the child something once does not mean that the child has got over the anxiety and fears over the crisis.
5. Touching and physically holding, hugging is extremely comforting for children during periods of great insecurity such as a crisis.
6. If necessary let the child hang around near you when you are at home or sleep with you for a few days of the acute stress period.
7. Observe your child at play and watch how your child plays. Frequently children express feelings of fear or anger while playing with dolls, toys or playmates. It will provide you with clues about how deeply the stress is affecting him/her.
8. Provide play experiences to relieve tension. Allow the child to work with plasticine or Play-Doh, draw or paint pictures, play in water or

with sand, use puppets and the like. If children display a need to hit or kick, give them something safe, such as a pillow an inflated doll or a soft ball.

9. Encourage the child to follow the usual routines wherever possible to give a sense of normalcy and to feel a sense of control over his/her life.
10. Deal with your own stress-related feelings and anxieties and do not inadvertently pass them on to your child.