

Connecting with Traumatized Teens



A teenager's reaction to trauma may challenge you in unexpected ways. Your son or daughter may display difficult or unexpected behavior and emotions.

Your own coping skills will influence your teen, so try not to lose your cool.

Some symptoms appear days, weeks or even years after an upsetting event, so patience is critical.

It's important to encourage your teen to express his or her emotions by talking to someone he or she trusts, and through creative ways such as art, writing, or photography.

Provide your teen with the support he or she needs while recovering from trauma with these suggestions:

- **Reassure your son or daughter that he or she is loved and safe.**
- **Listen and talk to him or her about the trauma.**
- **Enjoy activities together as a family.**
- **Talk about how your teen will resume his or her normal routine. Try to compromise using healthy goals that don't overwhelm while encouraging continued healing.**
- **Teach and encourage your teen to use positive self-talk when worried or thinking negative things.**
- **Provide extra attention to your son or daughter.**
- **Urge your teen to spend time with friends, listen to music or do other things he or she enjoys.**
- **Encourage exercise or practice deep breathing as healthy coping skills.**

Your teen needs your patience, support and love after experiencing a trauma. Help him or her understand better days are ahead, but don't hesitate to seek professional help if needed.