

SURE: Interventions Options for Children's Reactions to Disaster

AGES	SUPPORT	UNDERSTANDING	REASSURANCE	ENCOURAGEMENT
1-5 Years	Give warm milk and comforting bedtime routines.	Permit child to sleep in parents room or with sibling.	Give additional verbal assurance and ample physical comfort.	Provide opportunity and encouragement for expression of emotion through activities.
5-11 years	Give additional attention and consideration. Gentle but firm insistence on relatively more responsibility than one would expect from a younger child.	Temporarily lessen requirements for optimum performance in home and school activities.	Provide opportunity for structured but not demanding chores and responsibilities at home. Rehearse safety measures to be taken in future disasters.	Encourage verbal expression of thoughts and feelings about the disaster.
11-14 years	Give additional attention and consideration.	Temporarily lower expectations of performance in school and home activities.	Provide structured but undemanding responsibilities and rehabilitation activities. Rehearse safety measures in future disasters.	Encourage verbal expression of feelings and assist child to become involved with same age children.
14-18 years	Be available if adolescent wants to talk. Share own feelings as a role model.	If adolescent chooses to discuss disaster fears within family setting, such expression should be encouraged but not insisted upon.	Reduce expectations for level of school and general performance temporarily. Rehearse safety measures to be taken in future disasters.	Encourage discussion of disaster experiences with peers and extra family significant others, and assist in becoming involved with peer social activities.

By David Wee, M.S.S.W., 1994. Adapted from Farberow, N.L., and Fredrick, C.J. Training Manual for Human Service Workers in Major Disasters. Rockville, Maryland: National Institute for Mental Health, 1978.