



OCDE CRISIS RESPONSE NETWORK

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH FEELINGS

- Talk with your child, providing simple, accurate information to questions
- Talk with your child about your own feelings
- Listen to what your child says and how your child says it. Is there fear, anxiety or insecurity? Repeating the child's words may be very helpful, such as , "You are afraid that..." or "You wonder if the storm will come again today." This helps both you and the child clarify feelings."
- Reassure your child, "We are together. We care about you. We will take care of you."
- You may need to repeat information and reassurances many times. Do not stop responding just because you told the child once.
- Hold the child. Provide comfort. Appropriate touching is important for children during this period.
- Spend extra time putting your child to bed. Talk and offer reassurance. Leave night light on if necessary.
- Observe your child at play. Listen to what is said and how the child plays. Frequently children express feelings of fear or anger while playing with dolls, trucks, or friends.
- Provide play experiences to relieve tension. Work with play dough, paint, play in water etc. If children show need to hit or kick, give them something safe, like a pillow, ball or balloon.
- If your child lost a meaningful object, allow the child to mourn and grieve (by crying, perhaps). It is a part of helping the young child to cope with feelings about the disaster. In time, it may be helpful to replace the lost object.
- If you need help for your child, contact a community human services agency or a minister or other supportive resource for help.