



How to Support Preschool Children When Unfortunate Events Occur in the Community? For Parents

Recent fire incidents have saddened many families in the community. Whether children experienced it firsthand, witnessed the scene, or saw related images in the media, they may show temporary emotional, physical/behavioral, cognitive, and social reactions. These are normal responses.

Parents should pay attention:



Emotional

- Easily frightened, crying
- Emotional instability, mood swings (e.g., irritability, anger, crying, tantrums)
- Feeling numb

Cognitive

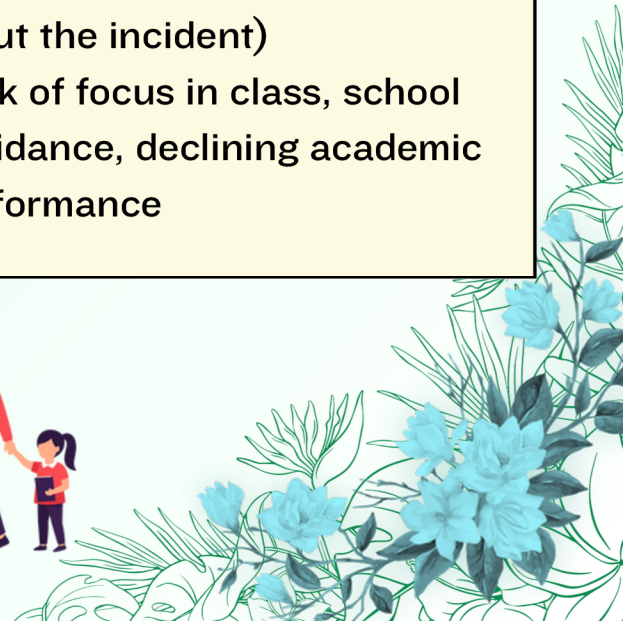
- Difficulty concentrating
- Exaggerating threats, hypervigilance
- Nightmares
- Asking more questions about disasters/death

Social

- Increased clinginess (e.g., following parents or caregivers closely, fear of separation)
- Withdrawal, reluctance to play or talk with others

Physical/Behavioural

- Physical discomfort (e.g., stomachache, headache)
- Regression (e.g., trouble sleeping, speech difficulties, overeating or undereating, bedwetting/soiling, excessive dependence)
- Withdrawal, loss of interest in daily activities
- Hyperactivity or unusual aggressive behavior
- Repetitive behaviors (e.g., reenacting traumatic events in play, repeatedly talking about the incident)
- Lack of focus in class, school avoidance, declining academic performance



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Ways to Help Recovery

1. Accept Your Child's Emotions and spend more time with them.
 - Parents should manage their own emotions first; a calm attitude reassures children.
 - Tell your child: "Your feelings are normal," and encourage them to express their feelings. Listen patiently and comfort them.
 - Avoid criticism or denial (e.g., "Don't be afraid, there's nothing to worry about.")
 - Offer hugs and physical contact to provide a sense of security.
 - Encourage expression through different activities (e.g., storytelling, drawing, crafts)
2. Filter Media Information
 - Avoid leaving the TV on for extended period of time; reduce exposure to videos or news about the event.
 - Explain the incident in a simple and truthfully way according to the child's level of understanding, and answer their questions honestly.
3. Return to Daily Routine
 - Help children resume regular schedules and activities.
 - Arrange activities that promote physical and mental well-being (e.g., listening to music, exercising) to help them relax and focus on other things.



If needed, parents can contact the following counseling services or seek help from teachers or social workers:

1. Social Welfare Department Hotline: 2343 2255
2. Hospital Authority Mental Health Hotline: 2466 7350
3. "Shall We Talk" Mental Health Support Hotline: 18111
4. BGCA Parent Hotline: 2866 6388
5. HKLSS Emergency Support Hotline: 2661 4883
6. Lutheran Parents Hotline: 6587 0881
7. Hong Kong Red Cross Psychological Support Hotline: 5164 5040

