



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER *for*
HEALTHY MARRIAGE *and* FAMILIES



Issue 57 | October 2017

Parenting through traumatic events

A Note from the Director

Natural disasters and events of community violence can be overwhelming for all of us watching these events play out on the news. October is Domestic Violence Awareness month and reminds us that in addition to the families directly impacted by these events, many families experience trauma and violence in their own homes. Parenting under the best of circumstances can be challenging. As parents, we want to care for our children and keep them safe. Unfortunately, when a disaster strikes, our best efforts only go so far. Being prepared is not always enough; outcomes associated with hurricanes, floods, wildfires and other traumatic events are often beyond our control.

During and after a disaster, we may shift into survival mode focused only on what

needs to be done, without realizing the emotional toll the event has taken on us or our family. Heightened stress can escalate family tensions. Communication and healthy conflict management skills are essential to our own self-care and supporting the needs of family members during a disaster and through the recovery period. Learning how to have age appropriate conversations with our children can help them better prepare and cope with what's happening around them. We hope the following tips and resources will be helpful to you and the families you serve as we work together to reduce the emotional toll of these events.

Best Regards,
Robyn Cenizal, CFLE, Project Director

Tip of the Month

Your monthly tip to strengthen the relationships of those you serve. Share it - Post it - Pass it on!

Children can face emotional strains after traumatic events, such as accidents, disasters, and witnessing and/or being victims of violence. Understanding how children and youth may react and caring for them in an age appropriate way are critical to their healing and future well being, but it can be difficult to know what to do. Here are [some tips](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for talking with and helping children and youth cope after a traumatic event:

- Give young children a lot of cuddling and verbal support. Take a deep breath before holding or picking them up and focus on them, not the trauma.
- For older children, spend more time with them than usual, even for a short while. Returning to school activities and routines at home can be important.
- Address your own trauma in a healthy way. Reaching out for help in dealing with trauma can not only make you stronger, but help build resilience for your children. [MentalHealth.Gov's](#) Treatment Locator can help you find services and resources in your area.

Featured Resources

The Resource Center's **Virtual Library** has collected more than 3,000 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research

materials.

- **Children Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence**

This Resource Center research brief addresses the impact of intimate partner violence (IPV) on children, approaches to serving children exposed to IPV, and symptoms of exposure to IPV. It explains the dynamics of IPV and explores factors that can influence the level of impact a child experiences. Implications for providers, including "red flags" and resources, are also included.

- **Tips for Talking With and Helping Children and Youth Cope After a Disaster or Traumatic Event: A guide for parents, caregivers, and teachers**

This fact sheet from SAMHSA DTAC helps parents and teachers recognize common reactions of children after experiencing a disaster or traumatic event. It highlights reactions by age group, offers tips for how to respond in a helpful way, and recommends when to seek support.

- **Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma**

This fact sheet discusses the nature of trauma, especially abuse or neglect, the effects of trauma on children and youth, and ways to help a child who has experienced trauma. Parents or foster parents who do not understand the effects of trauma may misinterpret their child's behavior, and attempts to address troubling behavior may be ineffective or, in some cases, even harmful. By understanding trauma, parents and foster parents can help support a child's healing, the parent-child relationship, and their family as a whole.

Events

The Resource Center's [Events Calendar](#) offers a listing of Resource Center events and other national, regional, and community-wide events that might be of interest. Upcoming events include:

- **Beyond Housing: A National Conversation on Child Homelessness and Poverty, January 9 -11, 2018**

Join fellow practitioners, policy makers, and service providers to share new and effective programs, solutions, and policies aimed at reducing poverty and homelessness among children and families in the US. Attend strategy and solution-based interactive workshops, enlightening panels, informative table discussions with peers, keynote luncheons, a networking reception, and much

more.

- **SSWR 22nd Annual Conference "Achieving Equal Opportunity, Equity, and Justice", January 10-14, 2018**

The Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Annual Conference offers a scientific program that reflects a broad range of research interests, from workshops on the latest quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to symposia featuring studies in child welfare, aging, mental health, welfare reform, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS. Over 500 symposia, workshop, roundtable, paper and poster presentations. Research methods workshops designed to enhance methods expertise and grant-writing skills and special sessions on research priorities and capacity building that target cutting-edge topics vital to contemporary social work research.

Feedback and Technical Assistance

To learn more about the Resource Center, visit us at <http://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org/>.

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports human service providers as they integrate healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach designed to promote self-sufficiency.

If you have suggestions or wish to speak with a Resource Center staff member, please [contact us](#) and we will be happy to assist you. To learn more about free training and technical assistance available to human service agencies, visit our [Training and Technical Assistance page](#).

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This newsletter was published by ICF with funding provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FH0003. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.