

# Let's talk about...

## Helping Your Child After a Scary Event

**A** trauma is a scary or shocking event that makes a person feel very upset. These events can change a child's daily life.

Here are some ways you can help:

- **Use simple words:** Talk clearly about what happened. Your child might ask the same questions many times—that is normal and helpful for them.
- **Let them play:** Playing and self-expressive activities are great ways for kids to process feelings.
- **Read together:** Use children's books to continue talking about tough situations and ways to cope.
- **Stick to a routine:** Keeping things the same as much as possible helps kids feel safe.
- **Listen to their feelings:** Let them know it is okay to feel sad, mad, or scared.
- **Ask questions:** Encourage them to talk about what is on their mind.
- **Get extra help:** If your child doesn't seem to be adjusting back to their regular routines and is having some continued challenges, more support may be needed (see below).

For more information or to connect with a Child Life Specialist, please visit: <http://ucdavis.health/childlife>



### Common Reactions

It is normal for kids to:

- Have a hard time explaining what happened.
- Go right back to playing after a tough talk.
- Ask the same questions over and over.
- Want to stick to their usual habits.

### Signs They Might Need More Support

Watch out for these changes:

- Feeling extremely angry, panicked, or scared.
- Saying bad things about themselves or the world.
- Acting differently, like taking dangerous risks.
- Eating much more or much less than usual.
- Having very low energy or wanting to be alone all the time.
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.
- Acting out or getting into trouble often.
- Constantly worrying that others will get sick or hurt.