

Helping Your Student through Loss: *Guidelines for Parents & Caregivers*

Our school community has been affected by the recent loss in our community.

As parents and caregivers, you play an important role in helping your children and your family cope with the stress reactions that can follow these events. Try to maintain a balanced perspective. On one hand, do take your child's reactions seriously. Don't say that "It wasn't so bad." Don't think "If we don't make a big deal, she will forget all about it." On the other hand, don't decide that the trauma was so bad that your child will never recover. Instead, try to maintain a hopeful belief that your child will heal and that your family will recover from the event as well.

When family members care for and support each other, they can often overcome the fears and stress of trauma. Some families grow stronger after a traumatic event and are even able to help others in need. Of the many ways to cope and heal from traumatic stress, many families count on community support, spiritual beliefs, and/or friends and other families.

You can help your family recover by doing the following:

1

Be patient.

There is no correct timetable for healing. Some children will recover quickly. Others recover more slowly. Try not to push your child to "just get over it." Instead, reassure him or her that they do not need to feel guilty or bad about any feelings or thoughts.

2

Assure your child that he or she is safe.

Talk about the measures you are taking to keep him or her safe at home and about what measures his/her school is taking to ensure his or her safety at school.

3

Maintain regular routines.

Maintain regular home (mealtime, bedtime) and school routines to support the process of recovery. Make sure your child continues to go to school and stays in school.

4

Limit media exposure.

Limit exposure to media outlets, such as social media sites and television news coverage of the event to avoid further exposure to the traumatic event.

5

Think about yourself.

Take time to think about your own experience of your child's traumatic event and any past traumatic events you may have experienced. Your own trauma history and your feelings about your child's trauma event will influence how you react

6

Get Help.

Consult a qualified mental health professional if your child's distress continues for several weeks. Ask your child's primary care physician or school for a referral to a mental health provider who has experience with child traumatic stress. If you need help, finding a mental health professional, contact SCUSD Connect Center at (916) 643-2354.