

Considerations for Young Children During and After Terrorism and War

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- **Young children are impacted by the traumas of terrorism and war**
 - They are not “too young” to notice but may not have the language or skills to tell you how they feel. How they react and their recovery often depends on the response of parents and other caregivers
- **Young children exposed to trauma may show how they feel through *changes in their behavior and emotions***
 - They may cry more, be more insecure and anxious, have difficulty paying attention, show repetitive play, sleep problems, and regressive behaviors (like bedwetting after being trained) and loss of language skills
 - Young children may also be more aggressive or withdrawn
 - They may respond to trauma triggers- for example, loud warning sirens; the color red in a toy reminding them of blood; needing to take shelter

- **Following these traumatic events, young children may show behavioral health symptoms:**
 - Increased in anxiety and, in some cases, symptoms of posttraumatic stress
 - Risk factors from different and other ongoing traumatic events or acts of violence may compound the response, e.g. death of family member
 - Parents and caregivers may experience increased anxiety, request supportive services, and be less emotional available for the child
- **It is important to be hopeful** as most children will show resilience and recover.
 - Resilience is likely for children who have more resources and support from family, education, and community
 - Support from parents and caregivers is most important to support recovery and resilience.
 - The greatest threats to children happen when individuals and systems (schools and community) that normally protect development are harmed or destroyed

INTERVENTIONS TO HELP YOUNG CHILDREN

- It is very important to **re-establish routines for young children** after trauma and violence; try to provide opportunities for them to play, relax, recover
- Be prepared to **listen to a young child and use careful observations.** Find out what they know,

answer questions, explain what is happening in a way they can understand. Be available to provide support.

- Do not be surprised if young children show how they feel and express anxiety through play
- Provide a sense of hope for the future

SUPPORT FOR ADULTS

- Provision of **support for parents, caregivers, teachers, and other adults is crucial**
- **Self-care for the adults who are caring for young children** is very important for themselves and to support resilience in children.