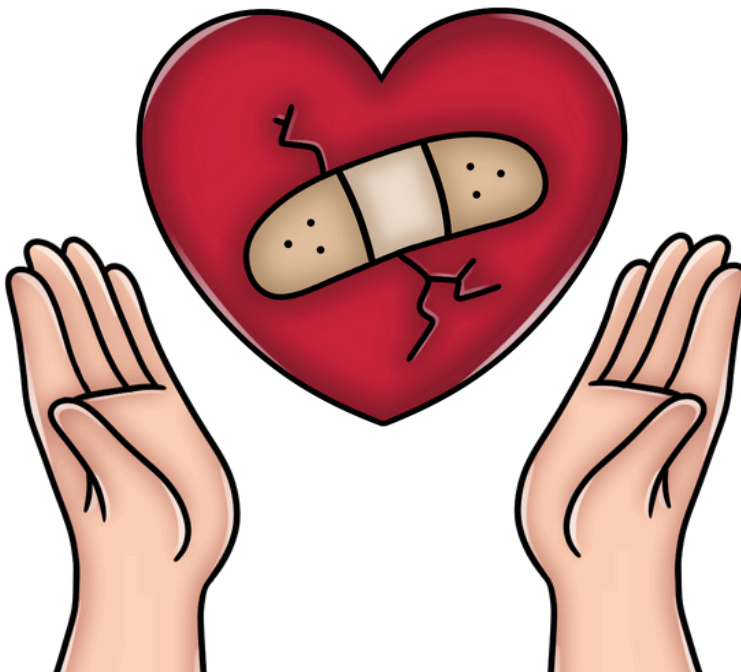


JOE TORRE  
**SAFE AT  
HOME.**

SAFE AT HOME  
**MARGARET'S  
PLACE**

# HOPE & HEALING

A GUIDED RESOURCE FOR COMMUNITY CARE



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# UNDERSTANDING NATURAL DISASTERS & THEIR IMPACT

Natural Disasters are powerful and natural events that can affect our homes, schools and communities. They include wildfires, earthquakes, floods and storms. These events can feel extremely scary and overwhelming but understanding them can help us process, prepare and feel less afraid.

The devastation of natural disasters extends beyond the loss of homes—it impacts the very core of individuals' lives and their ability to feel safe and supported. Homes are destroyed, leaving individuals without a physical place to find refuge. All too often, the trauma is compounded by the loss of community and routines that ground them.

Natural disasters can evoke feelings of helplessness in those affected or witnessing the event, but they also remind us of the strength of community. In times like these, the power of community and collective resilience becomes our greatest strength. They reinforce the urgency to our mission at Safe at Home: to create a world where every home is safe.

This guide is designed to provide young people, parents and caregivers, and educators and providers with essential resources to help families cope with the aftermath of the wildfires. It includes practical information on safety planning and psychological support, information about how to talk about coping and resilience with children and adolescents, and tips and suggestions for how to be a supportive ally.

We stand in solidarity with all who have experienced the loss of a safe place, reaffirming our commitment to a future free from harm. We hope that these resources are helpful in getting you started. For more information on how to support our efforts or to access our services, please visit [joetorre.org](https://joetorre.org)

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# HOPE & HEALING FOR YOUTH

A GUIDED RESOURCE

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# SELF CARE & WELLNESS PLANNING WITH YOUTH

## A RESOURCE/TOOL FOR CAREGIVERS AND EDUCATORS

### WHAT IS A WELLNESS PLAN?

A simple, personalized guide to help young people recognize what supports their well-being and how the adults in their lives can help. This plan can be used by caregivers, educators, or any trusted adults to work with a child or teen in identifying what makes them feel safe, calm, and supported when facing challenges.

### WHO SHOULD HAVE A WELLNESS PLAN?

A Wellness Plan can benefit any young person, especially those who may experience stress, anxiety, or overwhelming emotions. While it is especially helpful for students who have expressed being at risk of a crisis, it can also be a proactive tool to model and scaffold coping strategies before a crisis occurs.

Caregivers, educators, and other trusted adults can collaborate with youth to create a plan that helps them identify what supports their well-being, what strategies help them feel safe, and how to reach out when they need support.

### WHEN SHOULD I SEEK ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

While creating a Wellness Plan, a young person may share thoughts, feelings, or experiences that indicate they need more support. If you notice:

#### If you notice:

- Talk of wanting to hurt themselves or others
- Expressions of hopelessness or feeling like a burden

**Then,** it's important to connect them with a mental health professional or counselor.

#### You can:

- Listen and validate – “I appreciate you sharing this with me. I care about you, and I want to make sure you have the support you need.”
- Refer to a school counselor, social worker, or a crisis resource – “I think it would be helpful for you to talk with [School Counselor/Social Worker]. Would you like me to walk with you?”
- Use crisis resources – If there is immediate concern for safety, call a crisis hotline, connect with school-based mental health staff, or follow emergency protocols.

# SELF-CARE PLAN

## Bucket List

  \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

  \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## People to See/Call

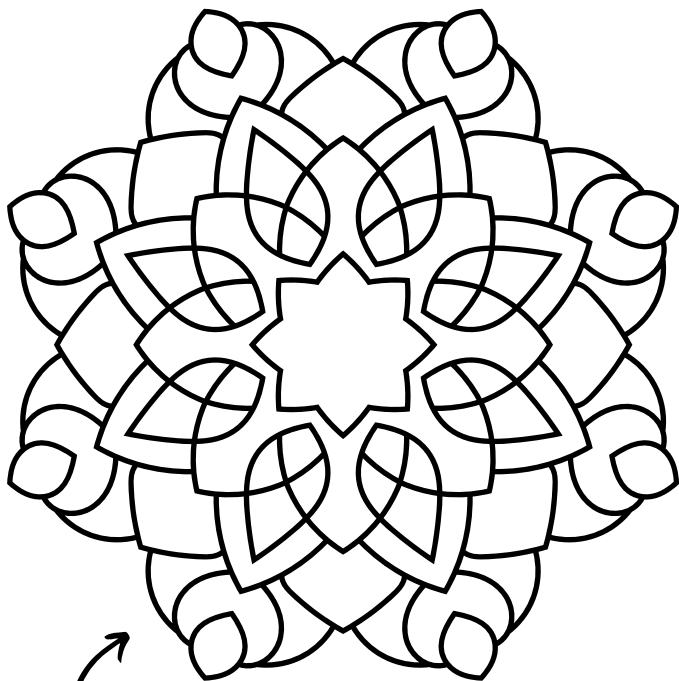
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\_\_\_\_\_



(COLOR ME IN)

## RELAXING ACTIVITIES TO HELP DE-STRESS



# WELLNESS PLAN

## 3 of My Strengths:

## THINGS I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO:

- 
- 
- 
-

## My Plan to Stay Safe:

### WHEN THIS HAPPENS...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### SAFE PEOPLE:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### I CAN COPE BY...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### SAFE PLACES:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Safety & Support Resources:

988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call or Text 988  
1-800-273-8255 (suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Crisis Text Line: Text "Home" to 741741 (crisistextline.org)

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 (thehotline.org)

# MY SAFE PLACE

A safe place is somewhere where you feel happy, calm, and protected.

A safe place is where you know you're cared for and can be yourself.

MY SAFE PLACE IS:

In my safe place I feel: \_\_\_\_\_

It looks like: \_\_\_\_\_

It smells like: \_\_\_\_\_

In my safe place I can hear: \_\_\_\_\_

DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR SAFE PLACE:



# MY IMPORTANT INFORMATION

It is important to remember your important information in case of an emergency like a fire, earthquake, or in case you get lost. With a parent or guardian, fill out your important information below!

**Hello! My Name is**

**My birthday is on...**



**My parent/guardian's  
phone number:**



**Emergency  
Services Number:**



**I live on...**



**My safe people are...**





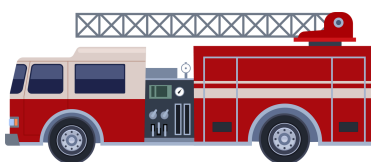
# WHO TO CALL FOR HELP



Sometimes, something bad can happen and we can feel scared or alone. When an emergency happens, we must know who to call for help. With a parent or guardian, fill out the spaces below.



If someone has been **hurt**, what number do I call?



If there is a **fire**, what number do I call?



If someone is in **danger**, what number do I call?

I will tell the operator my name: \_\_\_\_\_

and where I live: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

911 is always the number to call in emergencies because it's a special number that connects you to people who are trained to help right away. They can send the right help, no matter what kind of emergency it is. Having one number for all emergencies helps make sure that help can get to you quickly and easily.

# MINDFUL GARDENING 101



Often, local dollar stores sell gardening tools and seeds. If you don't mind getting a little dirty, your hands are the only tools you need!

There are no rules for the right kind of container. A container is just something that can hold soil and has holes in the bottom to let water out.

If the soil you have available isn't the best, you can add nutrients with veggie scraps, old coffee grounds, or broken eggshells.

Seed packets provide important information like: sunlight needs, depth of planting, watering frequency etc. You can also start growing plants from cuttings. Just place them in water for a week or two to sprout roots!

Different plants need different amounts of light! There are plants you can grow that do well in the shade.

Mindful gardening can be a useful tool you can use to focus on the present moment, relieve stress, and create a sense of empowerment. Try and use your five senses throughout the gardening process.

1. Choose the seeds that you'd like to plant. Once you open the package, make some observations! What color are the seeds? What's their size or shape? Take a moment to describe them to yourself.
2. Dig up the soil to make room for the seed. Notice how the soil feels in your hand. Is it warm? cool? moist? dry?
3. When placing the seed in the dirt, make sure there's not too much soil on top of it! You can use this time to continue practicing mindfulness. How does the soil smell? What else do you smell in your environment?
4. Try to water your seeds once a day. Seeds need to be moist but not too wet. Do your best to not let the soil get dry!
5. You can continue reflecting and observing throughout the growing process by keeping a gardening journal. Try keeping track of what you're growing, how you're feeling after, etc. Try including pictures, drawings, or even pressed flowers and leaves inside!



# MY PERSONAL GROWTH



Personal growth is the process by which a person works to develop themselves to reach their full potential. Personal growth can be an important part of a person's growth, maturity, success and happiness.

How have I grown in the past year?

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What positive changes am I most grateful for?

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In what areas do I want to continue to grow?

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**“The tiny seed knew that in order to grow it needed to be dropped in dirt, covered in darkness, and struggle to reach the light.” – Sandra Kring**

# MY GRIEF TRIGGERS PLAN

Make a plan for the tough days (death anniversary, birthdays, holidays, etc.)

First identify how you are feeling: Circle all feelings down below.

- |           |               |             |            |           |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| Guilty    | Numb/Detached | Hopeless    | Tense      | Confused  |
| Afraid    | Sorrow        | Hateful     | Empty      | Apathetic |
| Angry     | Frustrated    | Embarrassed | Aggressive | Helpless  |
| Irritated | Ashamed       | Distrustful | Insecure   | Bitter    |
| Jealousy  | In denial     | Lost        | Anxious    | Abandoned |
| Self-pity | Regret        | Pessimistic | Moody      | Forgotten |
|           |               |             | Panicked   | Neglected |

## Express ALL your feelings (+/-)

Name 3 people that you will talk to when you are feeling sad:

Name 3 activities that can help you express your feelings (ie. writing, drawing, dance, singing)

Name 3 ways to let out anger without hurting yourself or others: (ie. crying, hitting a pillow, boxing, running)

## Take care of your mind and body

Name 3 songs that you can listen to when you're feeling down:

Name 3 things you can do to take care of your mind+ body:

Name 3 places that you can go that are comfortable and safe:

## Take a break from your grief

Name 3 things that will distract you or help you take a break from grief:

List positive words of affirmation that you can tell yourself when you are struggling:

List three ways to help your body relax (take a bath, meditate, deep breathing)

## Connect to yourself and loved ones

Name 3 ways you can remember/ memorialize what you lost

Name 3 ways that you can continue your relationship with the loved one who died (ie. write them a letter, pray)

Name 3 ways you can spend peaceful alone time:

## Dive into the grief work

Your grieving process is unique to you. Go at the speed at which you are comfortable. Remember that the only way to heal is to feel. Below are some tips to help you process your grief:

1. Grief-focused journaling
2. Use art or music to process emotions
3. Use a grief app and track your feelings
4. Grief therapy
5. Grief support group
6. Learn about how your grief shows up for you!

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# HOPE & HEALING FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

A GUIDED RESOURCE

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# TALKING TO YOUTH ABOUT NATURAL DISASTERS

Children process natural disasters differently than adults, and your approach to discussing the wildfires can significantly impact their understanding and emotional well-being.

## Here are some tips:

**Use Simple, Clear Language:** Explain what is happening in a way they can understand.

For example:

- “There are fires in California that are burning trees and houses. Firefighters are working hard to keep people safe.”

**Avoid Overloading Them With Details:** Share only what they need to know based on their age and emotional readiness.

**Ask open-ended questions** like, “How do you feel about what’s happening?”

- Reassure Them: Let them know their feelings—whether fear, sadness, or confusion—are valid and normal.

**Model Calmness:** Children often take emotional cues from adults. Stay composed and show that it’s okay to feel concerned but still hopeful.

## Focus on Safety and Helpers

- Highlight the efforts of firefighters, first responders, and community helpers to reassure children that people are working hard to keep everyone safe.
- Share examples of how communities come together in times of need, like donations, shelter setups, or acts of kindness.

## Limit Media Exposure

- Minimize children’s exposure to graphic or upsetting news coverage, as it can increase anxiety. If they do see something, use it as an opportunity to discuss what they’ve watched and provide context.

## Empower Them to Help

- Encourage small acts of kindness or support, like donating toys, writing cards to firefighters, or participating in family donation drives.
- Helping can make children feel more in control and less helpless.

## Provide Comfort and Routine

- Maintain routines to provide a sense of normalcy. Consistency in bedtime, meals, and schoolwork can help ground children during uncertain times.
- Offer comfort through extra hugs, stories, or quality time together.

Children look to adults for guidance during crises. By providing honest, age-appropriate information and fostering a sense of safety, you can help them navigate this challenging time with resilience and hope.

For more resources, check out [Trinka and Sam: The Big Fire Story](#), a free story designed to help children cope with wildfires.

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# UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

## TRAUMA

Trauma is a distressing or disturbing experience that causes a person to feel fear for their physical or emotional safety. Trauma can be a one-time experience or a long-term ongoing experience, or multiple experiences of different instances of trauma. This distressing or disturbing experience can be physical or emotional, real or perceived, and it can threaten the child or someone close to them.

## TRAUMA RESPONSE:

When faced with traumatic events, children form a "trauma response" which can include emotional and physical responses to trauma. Trauma responses vary greatly from one person to the next. They are rooted in the pain of the traumatic event or experience. Responses to trauma can be lasting, long after the incident occurs, and can interfere with daily life.

## TRAUMATIZATION:

Children can become traumatized when their coping skills and supports from peers and trusted adults are not enough to support them through a stressful or disturbing event.

## TYPES OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE

Remember, trauma happens when someone's emotional or physical safety feels threatened. For example, trauma can occur from:

- Witnessing abuse or being the victim of abuse
- Fear of a caregiver's unpredictable or unstable behavior
- Separation from loved ones
- Bullying

## A CHILD EXPOSED TO TRAUMA MAY:

- Have trouble learning, due to the amount of mental energy spent reacting to trauma reminders
- Have trouble focusing, organizing, and processing information
- Seem distracted, often because they are trying to predict or avoid the next "bad thing" that will happen
- Seem very nervous, emotionally intense, or startle very easily
- Seem unable to experience or express any emotions



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## SUPPORTING CHILDREN & TEENS THROUGH **LOSS AND GRIEF**

Grief is a normal healing process that affects us on a spiritual, physical, mental, psychological, and emotional level. Even though we all experience grief, it is also a unique experience that affects everyone differently.

### WHAT ARE COMMON SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF?

**Physical:** Changes in appetite or sleep, crying, low energy, restlessness or difficulty concentrating

**Emotional:** Loneliness, anger, lack of control

**Mental:** Confusion, forgetfulness, nightmares

**Spiritual:** Anger with one's faith, anger with God, new priorities in life

### THERE IS NO "RIGHT" WAY TO GRIEVE

Honor your child's right to grieve in their own way. Remember that all feelings and thoughts are welcome (especially negative ones). A grieving child/teen has the right to:

- Know the truth about the death, the deceased, and the circumstances.
- Have questions answered honestly.
- Be heard with dignity and respect.
- Have privacy about their grief, emotions or thoughts.

### DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSES TO GRIEF

Between 6-12 years of age, children:

- Understand that death is final and universal.
- May experience guilt, anger, shame, anxiety, sadness, and worry about their own death.
- May refuse to go to school, and isolate themselves from their friends

Between 13-19 years of age, children:

- Have an adult understanding of loss and death.
- Still lack the coping skills of an adult.
- May display impulsive or reckless behaviors.
- They may spend more time alone or with friends.

### HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN AND TEENS ABOUT LOSS

Modeling desired behavior is the best way to teach children. Teach your child to be present in their body and feel their emotions. Be open with your children about how you feel in an age-appropriate manner, so that through your example, they learn that talking about their emotions is a healthy way to cope. Although it's absolutely okay for parents to grieve in their own unique way, it is still the adult's responsibility to take care of the child while also practicing self-care for themselves.

---

# PRACTICAL TIPS FOR TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING

Children can be very resilient. What helps children recover and build resilience is having supportive family members and adults who can support them through their trauma responses, either through activities that help children learn to regulate their feelings, or through professional interventions like counseling.

## **TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING:**

Trauma informed parenting means being mindful of how children are impacted by their past experiences and how our interactions with them can support healing or activate them to feel re-traumatized. Being trauma-informed is taking the extra step to examine our own behaviors and how they may impact a child who has experienced trauma.

## **ALLOW THE CHILD TO FEEL THEIR FEELINGS WITHOUT JUDGMENT**

Help them find words and other acceptable ways of expressing feelings, and offer praise when these are used.

## **IDENTIFY ACTIVATING BEHAVIORS**

Something you are doing or saying, or something in your home, may be triggering your child without either of you realizing it. Try to watch for patterns of behavior and reactions that do not seem to “fit” the situation. What distracts your child, makes them anxious, or results in a tantrum or outburst?

## **BE EMOTIONALLY AND PHYSICALLY AVAILABLE**

Some children who have been exposed to trauma act in ways that keep adults at a distance (whether they mean to or not). Provide attention, comfort, and encouragement in ways your child will accept. Follow their lead, be patient, and try to respond in a way that shows you are there to support them.

## **ENCOURAGE SELF-ESTEEM**

Positive experiences can help children recover from trauma and increase resilience. Examples include mastering a new skill; feeling a sense of belonging to a community, group, or cause; setting and achieving goals; and being of service to others.

## **TRY POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT**

Punishment, especially physical punishment, may make a child’s stress or feeling of panic even worse. When setting limits and expectations, consider using praise for desirable behaviors.

---

# PRACTICAL TIPS FOR TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING

## RESPONDING TO YOUR OWN NEEDS

**Your children's well-being depends on you!** Caregivers can take care of themselves by staying connected to social supports, getting enough rest, and taking time for restorative activities (e.g., exercise, meditation, reading, outdoor activities, prayer).

### BE CONSISTENT AND PREDICTABLE

Develop a regular routine for meals, play time, and bedtime. Prepare your child in advance for changes or new experiences.

### ASK FOR HELP

Reach out to your local library, place of worship, or community center to learn more about local events you may want to attend or groups you may want to join.

### MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER

Seeking help from a mental health provider is important when adults struggle with very high levels of stress and other challenges.

### LOOK FOR PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

If you are facing a personal challenge, consider joining a peer support group to help take care of your mental health and connect with people who are facing something similar.

Having a **strong foundation** for your support system **starts with you!** Your support system should match the unique needs, goals, strengths, and weaknesses of you.

**To identify the support you need, try asking yourself: "where do I get stuck?" "what do I need help with?"**

**A thoughtful response** might look like taking time for yourself before responding or taking a few deep breaths in the moment. Try getting on the child's physical level, if they are smaller, bending down to speak to them. You can try pointing out how you see the child behaving and offering a coping strategy. **(i.e. I see that you're upset. Let's take 3 deep breaths together.)**

---


# BUILDING RESILIENCE

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN IN MANAGING TOUGH EMOTIONS

Supporting children in building resilience includes helping them overcome difficult moments or emotions that might feel "too big" to handle. These simple activities can help children learn to regulate their feelings, and can help adults practice building their own resiliency too!

### BREATHE


Regulating breathing can help to calm the mind and body when feeling overwhelmed or frustrated.

-  **Try This:** Sit with your legs crossed on the floor. Breathe in slowly through your nose, pretend you are smelling a flower. Hold your breath for 3 seconds. Exhale slowly, pretend you are blowing out a candle.



### TAKE SPACE

Taking space allows you to reset and collect your thoughts and emotions before sharing with others.

-  **Try This:** Having a calming tool or fidget toy can help children focus nervous energy and relax. For instructions on how to create a family calming tool, [visit our youtube page](#)



# ENCOURAGE FEELINGS

Talking openly about feelings and using healthy communication leads to easier conflict resolution and understanding

- ✿ **Try This:** Encourage your child to use feelings statements to express their emotions in the moment by following the phrase:  
"I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."



# LISTEN ACTIVELY

Showing children you hear them and responding with empathy can support them in deescalating feelings of distress and help them feel heard and understood



- ✿ **Try This:** After listening to your child express their feelings, repeat back to them what you heard in your own words. For example "I hear you are feeling disappointed that you didn't get to go to the park today, is that right?"

# CELEBRATE THE POSITIVE

Reminding children that they are loved unconditionally allows them to be their full selves. Rewarding them with positive praise when they behave well, continues to encourage positive behavior.

- ✿ **Try This:** Draw a picture as a family and include all the things you love about each other!



---

# WHAT IS GROUNDING?

Stress, anxiety, anger, and intense emotions are all a normal part of being human, but sometimes we can feel like these things overwhelm us or take over our minds. During those moments a useful tool you can use is "**grounding**".

"**Grounding**" can help you to lower the intensity of your emotions by using your senses to help gently bring you back to the present.

## GROUNDING WITH YOUR SENSES

**Directions:** Use the following graphic as a guideline to help you ground yourself or your child during stressful moments.



### TOUCH

Find an item to touch or hold and take a moment to describe it to yourself.



### SMELL

Take a moment to smell your environment. Can you describe it?



### SIGHT

Look around you and find anything and describe its features.



### SOUND

Listen to your surroundings for a minute... What do you hear?



### TASTE

While eating or drinking, take some time to describe the flavors that you taste.

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# HOPE & HEALING FOR EDUCATORS & PROVIDERS

A GUIDED RESOURCE

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# UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

“ The initial trauma of a young child may go undetected but it will return to haunt us. ”

- James Garbarino

## KEY TERMS

**Childhood Trauma:** An actual or perceived threat to safety (be it emotional or physical) that a child finds overwhelmingly distressing or emotionally painful, which can result in lasting emotional and physical effects

**Traumatization:** Children become traumatized when their internal (e.g. coping skills) and external resources (e.g. supports from trusted family, friends) are inadequate to cope with an external threat.

## TYPES OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE

Types of trauma exposure or experiences can include but are not limited to: neglect, child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), witnessing abuse or being the victim of abuse, experiencing the death of a loved one, bullying, exposure to substance misuse (by a parent or caregiver), being displaced by war or terrorism, separation from loved ones, as well as exposure to medical trauma, and mental illness.

## RESPONSES TO TRAUMA:

When faced with traumatic events, such as those identified above, children form what is called a "trauma response" which can include emotional and physical responses to trauma. Trauma responses vary greatly from one person to the next. They are rooted in the pain of the traumatic event or experience. Children cannot choose what they have trauma responses to, and they also cannot choose what their trauma response will look like. The following are some examples of what trauma responses can look like:

- ✿ Perception of reality is affected
- ✿ Brain is wired to expect danger
- ✿ Triggers a trauma response: fight, flight, freeze or fawn
- ✿ Creates relationship problems
- ✿ Loss of sense of safety
- ✿ Creates a sense of helplessness
- ✿ Stress hormones flowing through the body are increased
- ✿ Results in serious behavior problems








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# HOW DOES TRAUMA IMPACT STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM?







## KEY TERMS

**Trauma-Informed Teaching:** Starts with an understanding of how trauma can impact learning and behavior. With this approach, educators think about what underlies student behavior and reflect on their teaching practices to find ways to better support students who may be experiencing trauma.

## HOW DOES TRAUMA IMPACT STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM?

-  **Distractibility or Inattentiveness:** Students may show difficulty focusing on tasks or be easily distracted in the classroom.
-  **Difficulty with Changes in Routine:** Students may have difficulty with transitions or with unexpected changes in routine.
-  **High Expectations of Self:** Some students may appear as "perfectionists" or present with a need to always excel.
-  **Signs of Nervousness:** Some students may have heightened vigilance, fidgeting, nail biting, or other signs of anxiety or nervousness.
-  **Difficulty Managing Emotions:** Students may demonstrate emotional responses like tantrums, anger that seems excessive, or seemingly unexplained crying.

## WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?

-  Talk with students about what helps them to calm down in moments of overwhelm, they know their emotions best.
-  Help students prepare as early as possible for changes in the schedule.
-  Ask for support from guidance counselors and other school staff.
-  Create a judgment free and flexible environment
-  Manage your own responses to trauma and difficulties by engaging in self-care
-  Notice signs and symptoms of trauma early and often. If you see a student struggling, do your best to be patient and offer support.


---

# TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR YOUR CLASSROOM


### CREATE SAFETY

Create environments where students feel emotionally and physically safe.

-  **Try This:** Create a calming area in your room and allow the child to choose when they need "self-time" or a short break in the event that they are feeling overwhelmed or agitated.


### PLAN FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Consider making accommodations and modifications to academic work.

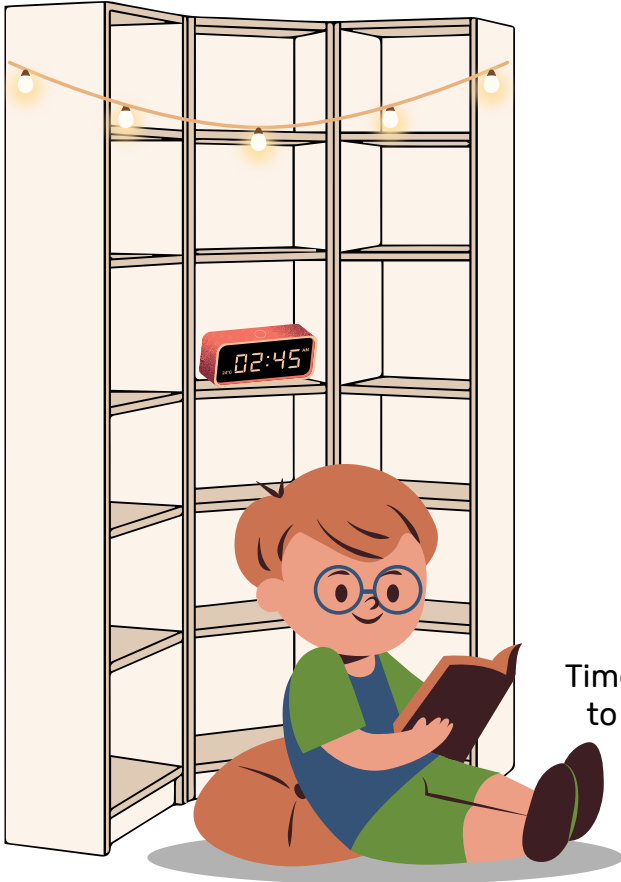
-  **Try This:** You might shorten assignments, allow additional time to complete assignments, give permission to leave class to go to a designated adult (i.e., counselor or school nurse) if feelings become overwhelming, and/or provide additional support for organizing and remembering assignments.

### SUPPORT EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Supporting emotional regulation skills in the classroom will help your students to learn self-regulation and their ability to control their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in relation to their environment.

-  **Try This:** Encourage your students to name their emotions in a space that is comfortable and appropriate- naming is the first step to regulating.

# ELEMENTS OF A CALMING AREA

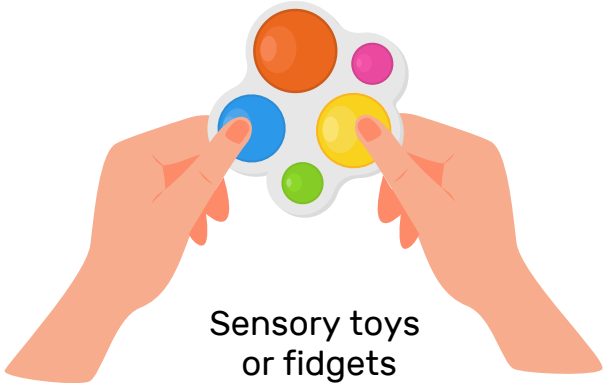


Comfortable seating like bean bags and chairs

Charts with self-soothing strategies and positive messages.



Timer to track when to return to class



Sensory toys or fidgets



Opportunities for students to exercise choice and reflect or express their emotions.

# TRAUMA-INFORMED CLASSROOM ROUTINES

A predictable routine can help students feel secure and ready to learn by minimizing surprises that might trigger stress responses.

*Small changes, such as greeting students at the door or using a consistent tone during instructions can make a big difference!*

**What elements of your current routine provide predictability and safety?**

**What could be adjusted to better support students?**

**Use the checklist below to help inform your reflection.**

- Greet students individually as they enter the room.
- Clearly outline daily objectives and activities at the start of each day.
- Use visual schedules or cues for transitions between activities.
- Provide flexible seating or quiet areas for self-regulation.
- Establish and maintain consistent rules with clear, supportive language.
- Incorporate calming techniques, such as mindfulness or deep breathing, into daily routines.
- Display affirmations, calming strategies or other self regulation tools throughout your space.

## DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Use songs or visuals to guide transitions and incorporate play-based calming techniques.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

Involve students in setting classroom expectations to increase buy-in.

### HIGH SCHOOL

Provide students with autonomy by allowing them to co-create parts of the routine, such as break times or group activities.

### REMEMBER!

**Routines are about consistency, not rigidity. Flexibility within a predictable framework is key to creating a supportive learning environment.**

---

# HOPE & HEALING

A GUIDED RESOURCE ON ALLYSHIP

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# WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY IN TIMES OF NEED

In times of crisis, whether due to natural disasters, public health emergencies, or other hardships, communities come together to support one another. There are many ways you can help, no matter where you are.

## GIVE TIME

**Check on a Neighbor** – Reach out to older adults, people with disabilities, or high-risk individuals to see if they need assistance. [AARP Community Connections](#) provides support networks for older adults.

**Sign Up to Volunteer** – Recovery efforts are often long-term. If you don't find an opportunity right away, keep checking. Explore volunteer opportunities on [VolunteerMatch](#), [Points of Light](#), or download the [Deed app](#).

**Join a Service Program** – Many organizations offer paid or volunteer service opportunities to help communities rebuild while gaining valuable skills.

## GIVE RESOURCES

The needs of affected communities change over time. Your contributions, whether financial, material, or informational, can provide essential relief.

**Share Information** – Stay informed and help direct people to trusted resources, such as [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster \(NVOAD\)](#) and [Direct Relief](#), which provide critical disaster response services.

**Donate Thoughtfully** – Whether providing funds, essential supplies, or services, verify that donations are going to reputable organizations. Use [Charity Navigator](#) to vet nonprofits or explore disaster relief funds on GoFundMe Causes.

This page is inspired by [California Volunteers](#), a government-based resource for community support. Be sure to check them out for California-specific volunteer opportunities.

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## GIVE GRATITUDE

First responders, healthcare workers, volunteers, and community members working on the front lines deserve recognition and encouragement. Small gestures of gratitude can have a big impact.

**Thank First Responders** – Send a handwritten card, record a short video, or share a public appreciation post on social media. Programs like [Operation Gratitude](#) and [Thank You First Responder](#) make it easy to show appreciation.

**Make a Sign** – Display a message of support in your yard or window to show appreciation for those making a difference.

## GIVE LOVE

A crisis can leave people feeling isolated or overwhelmed. Connection and kindness can help foster resilience and healing.

**Send a Message of Support** – A simple text, call, or note can provide comfort to someone going through a difficult time.

**Embrace Community** – Engage in conversations, offer a listening ear, or check in with neighbors.

**Support Local Businesses** – Small businesses often struggle after disasters. Purchase gift cards, leave positive reviews, or promote them in your network. Use resources like Local Chambers of Commerce to find ways to support businesses in your area.

**Share a Meal** – Providing food to those affected can offer both nourishment and comfort. Find local food banks or community fridges through [Feeding America](#) or similar local organizations.

**Be Kind** – Hard times affect everyone differently. Extend patience and compassion to yourself and others. If you or someone you know needs support, [Crisis Text Line](#) (text HOME to 741741) and [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) offer mental health resources.

**No act of kindness is too small. Whether giving your time, resources, gratitude, or love, your efforts help create a stronger, more resilient community.**

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# DO SAY...

1

"I believe you. You're not alone in this."

2

"That must have been really difficult. I'm here to listen."

3

"You have every right to feel this way."

4

"How can I support you right now?"

# DON'T SAY

1

"That doesn't sound that bad. Others have been through worse."

2

"You just need to move on and forget about it."

3

"Why didn't you say something sooner?"

4

"You should have handled that differently."



# ALLYSHIP IN ACTION

## CONNECTING WITH LEADERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

In the face of devastation or uncertainty, it's easy to feel powerless. One tangible step you can take is to write a heartfelt request to a policymaker, corporate leader, or influential entity, urging them to provide the financial relief and support our communities need.



New Message



To

Subject **Let's Build a Safer, Braver Future Together**

Dear [Recipient's Name or Title],

As a [parent/caregiver/teacher] who has witnessed firsthand the challenges our community faces, I'm reaching out with an urgent call for support. The recent [insert relevant event/need] have deeply impacted our lives, and the effects continue to ripple through our schools, homes, and neighborhoods.

Our community is resilient, but resilience alone isn't enough. We need changemakers like you to hear us, stand with us, and provide the resources we need to rebuild and thrive. Specifically, I ask for your support to [specific request, e.g., allocate funding, provide supplies, enact policies] that will [specific outcome, e.g., "ensure children have safe spaces to learn and grow" or "help families regain stability after the fires"].

This is about more than just recovery—it's about capacity building and empowering us to create a better future for everyone. Together, we can provide children, families, and educators with the tools and support they need to heal and grow.

Your leadership can make a profound difference. I would love the opportunity to share more about our community's needs and how your support can help us rise stronger than ever. Please feel free to contact me at [your email/phone number].

Thank you for listening, for caring, and for being part of the change we so desperately need.

With hope and determination,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Role or Connection to the Community]

For state or local leaders, check their official government websites to find the right contact information. Taking this step can help amplify your voice and create real change.

SEND



## STORIES OF HOPE: ANTIDOTES FOR HOPELESSNESS & OVERWHELM

Hearing from those who've walked a similar path—through stories, movies, or songs—can be deeply comforting. These narratives validate our emotions, remind us we're not alone, and offer hope that healing is possible. Connecting with others' experiences instills a sense of shared humanity, reassuring us that challenges can be overcome and growth is possible, even in adversity. We invite you to take comfort in these stories of hope, share them with those who might need them, or pass them along to your children.

### "Trinka and Sam: The Big Fire"

by Chandra  
Ghosh Ippen

Age Range:  
4-8 years

Trinka and Sam,  
two small mice,  
become scared and  
worried after they  
experience a severe  
fire and witness  
damage to their  
community.

### "A Terrible Thing Happened"

by Margaret M.  
Holmes

Age Range:  
4-8 years

A young raccoon  
struggles with  
trauma but learns  
to heal through  
talking and seeking  
help.

### "Stand in My Shoes: Kids Learning About Empathy"

by Bob Sornson

Age Range:  
4-8 years

A story that  
helps children  
understand and  
empathize with  
others' feelings.

### "The Rabbit Listened"

by Cor Doerrfeld

Age Range:  
3-7 years

A gentle story  
about loss and the  
power of simply  
being there for  
others in difficult  
times.

### "After the Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again)"

by Dan Santat

Age Range:  
4-8 years

A powerful  
metaphor for  
overcoming fear  
and finding courage  
after a setback.

### "I Survived" Series

by Lauren Tarshis

Age Range:  
8-12 years

Each book  
follows a young  
protagonist who  
survives a real  
historical disaster.

For more stories like this for free, check out [Youth Communication](#), [The Moth](#), [This American Life](#) podcast, [StoryCorps](#), [Humans of New York](#), and other platforms that share powerful personal narratives of resilience and hope.

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### "The Arrival"

by Shaun Tan

Age Range:  
10+ years

A wordless graphic novel that depicts an immigrant's journey to a strange, new land, capturing the feelings of isolation and hope.

### "I Am Malala"

by Malala Yousafzai

Age Range:  
12+ years

The inspiring true story of a girl who survived an attack by the Taliban and became a global advocate for education.

### "Enrique's Journey"

by Sonia Nazario

Age Range:  
15+ years

A young Honduran boy's journey to the US to reunite with his mother, shedding light on the hardships of immigration and family separation.

### "Hey, Kiddo"

by Jarrett J. Krosoczka

Age Range:  
14+ years

A graphic memoir about growing up with an absent mother, finding art, and navigating a complicated childhood.

### "A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster"

by Rebecca Solnit

Age Range:  
16+ years

This non-fiction explores how communities often come together in powerful and unexpected ways during times of disaster.

### "Out of the Fires: A Journal of Resilience and Recovery after Disaster"

by Ann Hazzard

Age Range:  
16+ years

A story to help children and families process through the trauma, grief, and loss of natural disasters.

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