

**Some things to consider:**

**TRY TO** listen to your child. If they are too young to verbalise their feelings, closely monitor their behaviour

**TRY TO** reassure your child that their feelings are normal

**TRY TO** keep their life as normal as possible. Try to maintain a routine

**TRY TO** allow your child to express their feelings

**TRY TO** reassure your child that they are safe and loved; that people are doing everything possible to make this a safer world

**TRY TO** address issues of death openly and honestly

**TRY TO** let children talk about their emotions & express themselves in games/ drawings

**TRY TO** spend extra time with your child, doing something fun and relaxing

**TRY TO** remember the importance of touch and hugs

**TRY TO** limit your child’s media exposure to media coverage of the event

**TRY NOT TO** make promises you can’t keep

**TRY NOT TO** transfer your own fears to your child

If you would like information about the Crisis Support Team for Essex, please visit the website. It identifies sources of help with some useful links.

[www.crisissupportessex.org](http://www.crisissupportessex.org)

In the event of an emergency, if lots of people are affected, a helpline will be set up. The number will be publicised via the media or the above website.

Keep this leaflet safe – it may be useful now or in the future. Use this space to write down some useful names and telephone numbers.

Name	Tel Number

**Other help available- National Organisations**

**Childline** 0800

1111 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**Samaritans** 116

123 [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**CRUSE** (Bereavement) 0844 477

9400 [www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk)

**Victim Support** 08 08 16 89

111 [www.supportline.org.uk](http://www.supportline.org.uk)

The above are free phone numbers except CRUSE which is 7p per min + phone providers charge, although a call back option is available.

We can provide the text in this leaflet in a form which may better suit your needs. Please contact us on 03330 132587 and let us know.



**Helping your child cope with crisis 0-5 years**



**This leaflet has been produced by the Crisis Support Team for Essex, which provides a multi-agency support service to people affected by major emergencies in Essex, or residents of Essex affected by a major emergency that occurs abroad or in another area of the UK.**

## Coping with Crisis

Your child has just been through a traumatic experience & you may be wondering what is happening to them.

When faced with an emergency or personal crisis, it is common for a child to experience strong emotional and physical reactions. This is normal and is a way of dealing with what has happened. Never assume a child is too young to be affected by an emergency.

Your child's reaction will depend on many factors including whether they were directly affected by the emergency, particularly death of a parent or relative; age of the child; whether they have experienced crisis or loss in the past, and how much of a traumatic incident they have witnessed directly, or via the media.

This leaflet has been designed by the Crisis Support Team for Essex. It is being given to you to help you understand what your child is going through, and how you can help them.

Friends & family can help you but you may feel emotionally & physically exhausted, or just want someone who isn't 'involved' to talk to. Agencies can provide support to people, like you, who have been affected by an emergency and the telephone numbers are available on this leaflet.



There are other leaflets available to you including: supporting yourself; family and friends; survivors accessible on our website

[www.crisissupportessex.org](http://www.crisissupportessex.org)

### Normal feelings your child may experience

Each child's response to a crisis is different and feelings may vary in intensity and last for different amounts of time. The following are just some of the reactions they may be experiencing:-

#### Fear & Anxiety

- of effects on oneself & others
- of a similar event happening again
- of being alone, or having to leave loved ones

#### Guilt

- for being alive
- that in some way, it is their fault

#### Shame

- about crying
- needing support

#### Anger

- of what happened

#### Memories

- of people they knew and loved
- 'flashbacks' of the event

#### Helplessness

- of being vulnerable

#### Numbness

- event may seem unreal
- can't take everything in

**WARNING - Accidents are more common after severe stress**

## Typical Reactions of Children 5 years of age and under

You may find that:

- they fear being separated from a parent
- their sleep patterns are disturbed or they have nightmares
- they have speech difficulties
- they fear the dark
- there is increased crying
- there is clinging to a parent
- they return to younger behaviour such as bed wetting, thumb sucking
- there is loss or increase in appetite

These feelings and physical reactions are your child's way of protecting itself after a crisis. Do ask for help, especially if:

- you feel that you can't handle your child's feelings or physical reactions
- you have no-one to talk to
- your child's reactions become more frequent and severe, or worse than ever

Parents and other adults can help children cope. Take time to listen and not pass judgement. Let them know that it is okay to cry and be sad and be sure they know they do not have to be 'tough'. Make sure all caregivers in the child's life, such as babysitters, daycare providers, are aware of the impact of the event on your child.