

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening, and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. The individual's experience of these events or circumstances helps to determine whether it is a traumatic event.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/traumajustice/traumadefinition/definition.aspx>



# RECOGNIZING TRAUMA

Know the Facts and Find Help for Survivors

## Types of Trauma

- Violence
- Physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse
- Witnessing or exposure to violence/abuse
- Neglect
- War zone & refugee experiences
- Traumatic grief
- Terrorism and torture
- Immigration experiences
- Traumatic medical procedures

## Manifestations of Trauma

- Unexpected reactions/overreactions (anger, hostility)
- Distractibility (jittering, fidgeting, difficulty focusing)
- Anxiety or irritability
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Avoidance of people/places/situations
- Difficulty sleeping
- Substance use or abuse
- Difficulty coping with change or unanticipated circumstances

## Prevalence

Sixty percent of American children were exposed to violence, crime or abuse in their homes, schools and communities in the most recently completed comprehensive national survey. *National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (2008)*

Exposure to violence is a national crisis that affects approximately two-thirds of our children. Of the 76 million children currently residing in the United States, an estimated 46 million can expect to have their lives touched by violence, crime, abuse, and psychological trauma this year. *Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence (December 2012)*

In another study, more than 68% of children and adolescents had experienced a potentially traumatic event by the age of 16. Impairments---including school problems, emotional difficulties, and physical problems---occurred in more than 20% of children who had been traumatized. In those who had experienced more than one traumatic event, the rate was nearly 50%. *Copeland, W.E., Keeler, G., Angold, A., Costello, E.J. (2007). Traumatic events and posttraumatic stress in childhood.*

## How Parents, Caregivers, and Friends Can Help Trauma Survivors

- Be a dependable source of hope and optimism for the survivor.
- Help the survivor identify healthy coping skills for the strong emotions they manage, such as exercise, writing in a journal, and mindfulness.
- Help the survivor develop supportive relationships and a sense of connection.
- Do your best to create a sense of safety and stability for the survivor of trauma.
- Seek out information and support related to the specific type(s) of trauma that have been experienced (see reverse).
- Behaviors related to a trauma history are often interpreted as deliberate. Caregivers should rely on *positive behavior management techniques* rather than harsh punishments that may escalate a situation and trigger fear and anger.
- If trauma symptoms have a negative effect on behavior, daily living, or school performance, consider asking school staff for guidance or counseling (see reverse).
- Know your role: Be a good listener, but do not ask for details about the trauma. Seek guidance from experts when appropriate.

## RESOURCES

### Immigrant / Refugee Children

<http://www.refugees.org/resources/for-service-providers/working-with-refugees.html>

[http://www.brycs.org/clearinghouse/search\\_resources.cfm](http://www.brycs.org/clearinghouse/search_resources.cfm)

### Childhood Trauma

<http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma/index.aspx#TipsChildren>

<http://www.nctsn.org/resources>

### When a Child's Parent has PTSD

[http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treatment/children/pro\\_child\\_parent\\_ptsd.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treatment/children/pro_child_parent_ptsd.asp)

### Office of Psychology Services of the Fairfax County Public Schools

Provides consultation on student mental health, learning and behavioral issues.

Phone: (571) 423-4250

<http://www.fcps.edu/dss/ips/psychologists>

### Office of School Social Work Services of the Fairfax County Public Schools

Provides consultation and resources to students and families around mental and behavioral health needs.

Phone: (571) 423-4300

<http://www.fcps.edu/dss/ips/socialworkers/index.shtml>

### Northern Virginia Family Service

Violence Intervention and Prevention Services: Gang Prevention Program for Children Exposed to Violence

Phone: (571) 748-2574

### Entry and Referral Services - Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Provides mental/behavioral health intake, assessments and referrals

Phone: (703) 383-8500

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb>



Created by the  
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Healthier Fairfax



## EMERGENCY AND CRISIS NUMBERS:

*Help is available 24/7*

911 – in any life threatening situation

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Also provides guidance for helping someone in distress.

National Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Web and chatline link: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

### PRS CrisisLink

Provides 24-hour confidential listening, crisis intervention, information and referrals

Regional Hotline: (703) 527-4077

Regional Textline\*: (703) 940-0888

\*CrisisLink now provides this number for users to reach out for help via text message!

<http://prsinc.org/crisislink/services/>

Fairfax County 24-Hour Emergency Services: 703-573-5679, TTY 711

Alternative House Teen Crisis Hotline: 1-800-SAY-TEEN (729-8336)

Fairfax County 24-Hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline/Helpline: 703-360-7273