

## Common Reactions to Trauma – Children

(Adapted from Johnson in School Crisis Management, 1993)

<p><b><u>Ages 1-5</u></b>            Bedwetting            Thumb sucking            Repetitive play; re-enacting trauma            Anxious attachment, clinging            Aggression/disobedience</p> <p><b><u>Ages 6-11</u></b>            Anxious attachment, clinging            Regression to outgrown habits            Competition with siblings            Repetitive talking, re-enacting trauma            Disobedience            Decline in school performance</p> <p><b><u>Ages 12-18</u></b>            Can't meet responsibilities            Resumes earlier coping styles            Withdraws socially, interpersonal problems            Self-critical            Breaks rules, defies authority            Abuses alcohol/drugs            Decline in school performance            Sudden changes in attitudes, personality</p>	<p><b><u>Ages 1-5</u></b>            Nervous, anxious, worried            Separation anxiety            Fearful of reminders            Panicked/hysterical            Irritable            Numb</p> <p><b><u>Ages 6-11</u></b>            Fear of recurrence            Wanting to be fed, dressed            Afraid of going to school            Aggression            Overly concerned for family's safety            Anger, hostility, belligerence            Apathy, withdrawal            Guilt            Sad</p> <p><b><u>Ages 12-18</u></b>            Angry, hostile, belligerent            Guilt            Sad            Anxious            Apathetic</p>	<p><b><u>Ages 1-5</u></b>            Loss of appetite            Pale appearance            Overeating            Bowel/bladder problems            Sleep disturbances            Nightmares</p> <p><b><u>Ages 6-11</u></b>            Complaints about vision            Complaints about stomach problems            Headaches            Pale appearance            Itching            Sleep disturbances</p> <p><b><u>Ages 12-18</u></b>            Headaches            Vague complaints/pain            Skin rashes            Loss of appetite or overeating</p>	<p><b><u>Ages 1-5</u></b>            Shorter attention span            Confusion regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event</li> <li>• Locations</li> <li>• Sequencing</li> <li>• Death</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Ages 6-11</u></b>            Confusion regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event</li> <li>• Sequencing</li> </ul> Inability to concentrate <p><b><u>Ages 12-18</u></b>            Problems concentrating            Over concern re: health            Not wanting to think about painful emotions</p>
--	---	---	---

Note to Parents/Adult Caregivers: This list is to give you a better understanding of what children may experience after a trauma. Most of these common reactions will gradually get better. If reactions get worse or persist, consult with a trained counselor. For further tips, see Helping Children in the Midst of Crisis (7.8)