
Children in Recovery

— Brave the Quakes —

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How a disaster is disruptive and stressful:

Dr Rob Gordon (2011) identified that disasters:

- Push us out of our comfort zones
- Replace complex self with “survival/victim” self
- Destroy routines and daily life
- Reduce social interactions
- Increase high emotions or numbness/reduce reasoning

Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms (PTSS):

3 post-disaster trajectories across 3 - 18 year olds (Lai et al, 2017):

- Resilience
 - Within first year: 37.0% - 79.4%
 - After the first year: 45.2% - 72.1%
- Recovery
 - Within first year: 7.3% - 43.0%
 - After the first year: 16.4% - 27.1%
- Chronic
 - Within first year: 3.9% - 38.0%
 - After the first year: 4.0% - 23.0%

How do we identify those at risk?

- Measure: UCLA PTSD-Reaction Index (PTSD-RI).
- Identify: those with disaster risk factors.
- Monitor: for behavioural changes post 3 to 6 months.

Disaster risk factors for a chronic PTSS trajectory:

- Perceived life threat
- Experience of evacuation
- Housing/school disruptions
- Violence exposure
- Low social support
- General anxiety levels
- Negative coping style
- Parental reactions/mental health

PTSS across age groups (post 3-6 months)

- Preschool
- Primary age
- Adolescents

Outreach and treatment

- Host Q and A community forums
- Talk to teachers/ parents
- Peer support
- Health professionals monitor
- Check in /monitor at intervals
- Mindfulness programs
- CBT Therapy

Brave the Quakes for parents and caregivers:

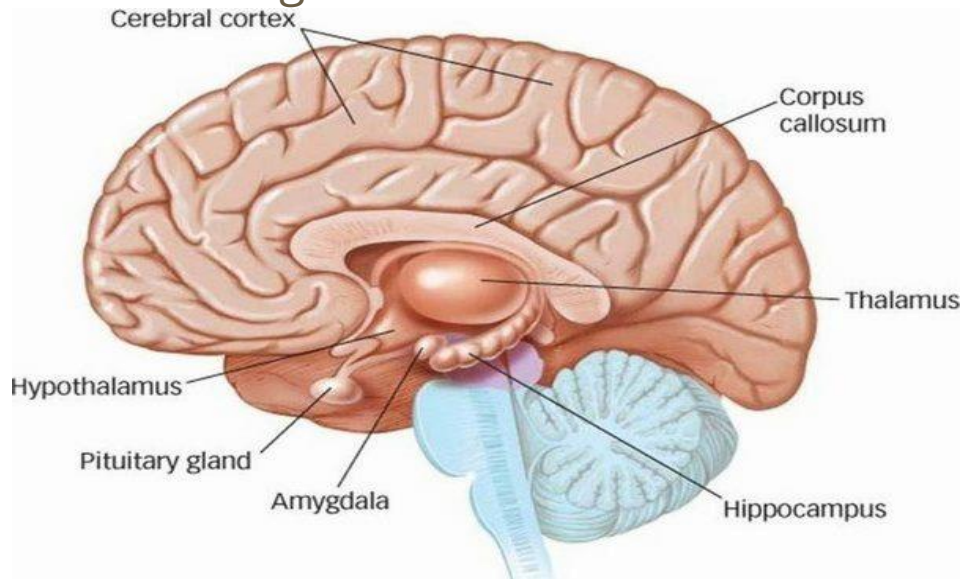
- Be prepared and control the things you can.
- Breathe. Find the calm.
- Use positive self-talk and mindfulness.
- Help children remember their strength.
- Be understanding, loving, and talk about it.
- Model good behaviour.
- Improve sleep rituals and daily routines.
- Live, Laugh, Exercise: Focus on the meaningful.

Be prepared and control the things you can.

- Have a plan. Do drills.
- Create an emergency kit with kids.
- Secure furniture and breakables around the house.
- Adjust your attitude.
- Limit exposure to the news and Geonet.

Breathe. Find the calm.

- Talk about the fight or flight response.
- Breathe to reset the lizard brain (3, 4, 5).
- A calm mind can make good decisions.



Use positive self-talk and mindfulness.

- Unstick from fear based thoughts.
- Retrain the brain with new thoughts.
- Practice mindfulness.

If we have peace of mind, even negative experiences do not upset us.

- Dalai Lama

Help children remember their strength.

- List of times a child was brave.
- Create a superhero.
- Carry an amulet.
- Make a Brave Box.
- New power- talk back to lizard brain.

Be understanding, loving, and talk.

- Encourage talking.
- Space to speak and be heard.
- Let them ask questions.
- Be neutral and calm about the worries.

Model good behaviour.

- Model good coping skills.
- Be calm in a crisis.
- Be resilient.
- Learn new coping skills if necessary.

Improve sleep rituals and daily routines.

- Routines give a sense of security.
- What did you do before the disaster?
- If sleep is disrupted, add some new rituals.

Live, Laugh, Exercise: Focus on the meaningful.

- Focus on enjoyment and meaning in life.
- Return to previous recreational activities.
- Find new positive experiences.
- Help others. Doing good for others, does good for us.

References

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