



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

The stress from a traumatic event can disrupt brain development, and if not addressed, may cause physical and mental health problems in children. It is important to learn tools to manage our emotions and the stress caused by the recent events. By changing a feeling, a thought, or a behavior, we can improve our emotional and physical well-being.

We can practice changing:

- **Our feelings** through mindfulness exercises
- **Our thoughts** by focusing on what we love, and
- **Our behavior** by taking care of ourselves by eating healthy foods and getting enough sleep

Here are some suggestions for ways to help your child manage their stress:

- **Practice breathing deeply with your child.** Sit or lie comfortably. Put your hands on your tummies. As you inhale slowly through the nose to the count of four, feel your hands raise as your tummies expand. Hold your breath for a moment. Then exhale slowly through your mouth for the count of four. Feel your hands lower as your tummies return to normal
- **Consider creating a Calm Corner in your home.** This is a space designated as a safe place for any family member to retreat to when feeling uncomfortable emotions. Allow your child to choose when they need time in the Calm Corner
- **Help your child focus** on the people, things, or activities they love. While driving in the car, eating a meal, or settling down at bedtime, make a game out of naming something you love that starts with each letter of the alphabet. You can take turns naming things or you can see how many things you can name together for each letter
- **Help your child practice healthy habits** to help their bodies manage stress better. Consider creating a chart with the healthy habits you'd like your child to practice each day, such as eating healthy foods, exercising, drinking water, getting enough sleep, washing their hands, and brushing their teeth. Encourage your child to put a check by each habit they practice.

Managing one's emotions and taking care of oneself is important for recovering from a traumatic event.