



WE ARE CONNECTED

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network defines trauma as any frightening, dangerous, or violent event that poses a threat to a one's life or body. Trauma disrupts a teenager's ability to learn, solve problems, and manage emotions. But research shows that the single most protective factor for teenagers who have experienced trauma is their relationship to a caring adult.

Here are some suggestions to help your teen understand the importance of connection and identifying the people who support them:

- **Verbalize to your teen that you are there to keep them safe.** Following a traumatic event, teens often need additional reassurance that the adults in their lives are available to help them through the difficult time. Remind them that they are a part of a family who loves and cares for them
- **Ask your teen to state their needs as they arise,** as opposed to always meeting their needs before they ask. Ask your teen how they can get the need met. Sometimes the answer will be themselves. If they need help meeting a need, encourage them to ask for the help they need
- **Talk with your teen about the people who help them meet their needs.** These people may include family members, friends, neighbors, school personnel, and other community members such as coaches, counselors, medical professionals, and emergency workers. Consider having your teen send a text or email to someone who has helped them to meet a need during this difficult time
- **Encourage your teen to help meet a need for someone else.** This may be someone in your family, a friend, or others in the community. Consider volunteering with your teen at a food bank or shelter. Helping others helps teens to feel a sense of empowerment that they can make a difference

Feeling connected is important following a traumatic event. Check in with your teen to make sure that they feel connected to others during difficult times.