

# How to Help Your Child Deal With a Minor Traumatic Incident?

## 5 things you can do as a parent

Depending on the developmental level of your child, the impact of life events like a small fender bender, or grandpa going to the hospital can last for a long time. This is for kids age 3-10.

You are your child's first responder. They are going to turn to you for help first because they trust you and know that you can help. It can be confusing for you because it is difficult to know how much information you can give to your child safely. You also might worry about the wellness of your child. Here are some useful tips-

### Use open ended questions

Open ended questions provide opportunity to gain more information. You can ask-

- How did it feel?
- What did you want to do?
- Can you tell me more?

### Validate and acknowledge your child's feelings and thoughts in a non-judgmental way

You can say something like -

- Yes, it was scary
- You wanted to help
- You thought grandpa is going to die when he went to the hospital
- You feel sad that you can't play with sister now
- You are worried that we will get into an accident again

### Ask your child to draw the incident

- When your child starts talking about the incident give them crayons/markers and ask them to draw it the way they remember it.
- Make non-judgmental comments about the drawing such as; I see a person on the ground, you drew yourself in the corner

### Hold your child

Nothing tells your child they are safe and protected other than a hug.

- Hold them close to you
- Sit them on your lap and reassure them that you are there for them.
- If they are having trouble sleeping, hold their hand while they are holding a stuffed toy/blankie, sing a lullaby, read a book.

### Reassure them that things are OK

Children feel better when they see that the situation is better now.

- Keep their routine as normal as possible
- Use technology. Do face time with grandpa to reassure your child that he is fine.
- Avoid giving them too much information- give only age appropriate information
- Distract with a playdate, movie, visit to a zoo, playing a board game.