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Emotional Support

How to Assess: Emotional Support

TRAUMATIC STRESS IN ILL OR INJURED CHILDREN



What Does The Child Need Now?

- Ask parents: “What helps your child cope with upsetting or scary things?”
- Ask child: “What has been the best thing so far that helps you feel better?”

Who Is Available To Help The Child?

- Do the parents understand the illness or injury and treatment plan?
- Are they able to help calm their child?
- Are they able to be with their child for procedures?

How Can Existing Supports Be Mobilized?

- Ask parents: “Who can you or your child usually turn to for help or support? Are they aware of what’s happened?”

NCTSN

The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

www.NCTSN.org

How to help: Emotional Support

Tips to help families of injured or ill children

1 Encourage parent presence.

- Encourage parents to be with their child as much as possible during hospital stay.
- Encourage parents to talk with their child about worries, hopes, etc.
- Parents know their child better than anyone, and can help staff understand their child's needs and coping strengths.

2 Empower parents to comfort and help their child.

- Help parents understand the illness or injury and treatment plan — so that they can give age-appropriate explanations to their child.
- Encourage parents to use the ways they have learned to soothe and calm their child at home.
- Parents may welcome specific suggestions from staff about how to help their child during procedures — e.g., “You can hold his hand and talk to him while we do this.”

3 Encourage social support & involvement in “normal” activities.

- Suggest age-appropriate positive activities that fit the child's medical status (play, family time, videos.)
- Promote the child's appropriate contact with friends, classmates, teachers (letters, calls, email.)

