

Trauma

Trauma is an event or series of events that cause intense psychological and physical stress and has lasting negative effects on a person's well-being.

Traumatic events include physical and sexual abuse, emotional and physical neglect, natural disasters, and witnessing or experiencing violence in the home, community, or school. Exposure to a traumatic event does not always lead to a traumatic stress disorder.



It's estimated that 25% of American children will experience at least one traumatic event by the age of 16

Signs and symptoms are recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive. There are three main categories:

- 1. **Re-experiencing:** nightmares, memories, intrusive thoughts and flashbacks
- 2. Hyperarousal/hypervigilance: feeling unsafe, easily startled, always on edge, overly cautious and scared of others
- 3. **Avoidant:** withdrawing socially, staying away from people, places and things that remind them of trauma, engaging in activity to distract themselves

Early Childhood

- Fear
- Excessive crying
- Loss of appetite
- Nightmares
- Excessively clingy
- Difficulty separating from parent
- Sleep disturbance

School-Age

- Excessive fear
- Feelings of guilt
- Feelings of shame
- Difficulty focusing
- Sleep disturbance
- Difficulty separating from parent

Adolescence

- Feeling depressed
- Feeling misunderstood
- Irritability
- Developing an eating disorder
- Engaging in self-harm
- Alcohol/substance use
- Sleep disturbance

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in which someone intentionally and repeatedly causes another person injury or discomfort through physical contact, words, or subtle actions. Intense and repeated bullying can be traumatic. Trauma and bullying can lead to a child wanting to hurt themselves.

Trauma can lead to a variety of mental health and learning disorders, as well as make existing disorders worse.



Protective Factors

Having family meals together Feeling connected to school/community Resilience Problem-solving skills Sense of purpose

Treatment Options

Therapy alone Medication alone Combination of both

Getting help early is better. Never worry alone. Consult your pediatrician.

Frequency Intensity Duration

If you notice changes in the frequency, intensity and duration of your child's behavior or mood, it's important to let your pediatrician know.

List questions and concerns to share with your pediatrician:

How often is it happening? How intense is it? How long does it last?

Are these behaviors impacting your child in school, at home and with friends? Include your child's medications and family mental health history.



Questions/Concerns

If your child is experiencing a mental health crisis or suicidal thoughts, call or text 988, Connecticut's Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

988 offers 24/7/365 access to trained staff who can help in mental health and substance use crises, provide referrals to resources and perform warm transfers to Mobile Crisis Intervention Services or emergency services including Urgent Crisis Centers in your community.

988
SUICIDE & CRISIS

If your child is experiencing a life-threatening situation

Dial 911 immediately





Attention Health Care Provider:

If you have questions or need clinical guidance, ACCESS Mental Health is FREE and available to you.

Call us: Monday-Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Hartford Hospital 855.561.7135

Wheeler Clinic, Inc. 855.631.9835

Yale Child Study Center 844.751.8955