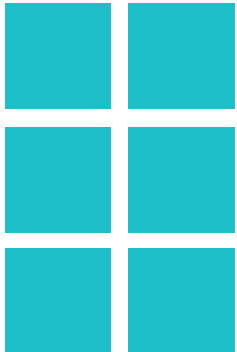


## WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Take care of yourself first. You may experience stages of loss: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Work through your grief. Then, focus on your child.

A parent's response to a grieving child can reduce the emotional effect of a traumatic event.

- Be physically present
- Show compassion
- Be patient
- Allow the child to talk about it
- Listen carefully
- Acknowledge feelings
- Show an understanding of what happened
- Give reassurance
- Follow through on promises and agreements



Vision: 100% Student Success

Mission: "Educate and prepare each student for college, career and life."

## SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Lisa N. Cane  
Nicole M. Carr, Ph.D.  
Carol J. Cook  
Bill Dudley  
Caprice Edmond  
Laura Hine  
Eileen Long

## SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Kevin K. Hendrick

Pinellas County Schools  
301 Fourth Street SW  
Largo, FL 33770  
(727) 588-6000



## WHEN A CRISIS HAPPENS AT OUR SCHOOL

### PARENT INTERVENTION

Student Services

[www.pcsb.org](http://www.pcsb.org)

(727) 588-6307



## HOW CHILDREN REACT TO A TRAUMATIC EVENT

A traumatic experience is often sudden, unexpected, and overwhelming.

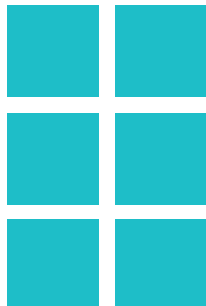
Children and teenagers have fewer skills to draw upon, are less experienced and are also less aware of the dangers in life.

Children are in shock when they experience or hear about a trauma created by humans or nature.

Common reactions include:

- Fear
- Loneliness, helplessness and sadness
- Confusion
- A sense of responsibility, anger, guilt, shame, blame or regret.
- Sleeping difficulties
- Mild physical complaints
- Concentration difficulties

Teens will try to make some sense of what happened and it is important for them to come to a resolution about the event.



## PARENT RESPONSE

- Talk about the traumatic event with your child. Invite him or her to talk about it anytime they want. Let them take the lead as to when, how long, and how much you talk with them about the trauma.
- Listen to and answer them as best you can. Tell your child that you do not know why the event happened, and that you are confused and upset by it, too.
- Encourage your child to continue their work and routines.
- Discuss support systems:
  - School counselors
  - School social workers
  - School psychologists
  - Grief counselors
  - Youth leaders
  - Community and religious organizations
- Reassure them that they will get through this and you are there for them.
- Encouraging students to focus on their routines and work as much as they are able is usually comforting.
- Grief may resurface when a sight, sound, smell or loss reminds them of the trauma. Everyone grieves differently and it may take some time for a child to cope so they can move forward.

- Give them ideas on how to positively cope with their physical symptoms.
  - Eat carbohydrates.
  - Drink water or juice. (Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and drugs as they delay the grieving process.)
  - Read a book, listen to calming music.
  - Draw or make a card for the family.
  - Reminisce about the fun moments and memories with your friend.



## THE GRIEVING PROCESS

Grieving is a natural and temporary response to an important loss. All people grieve differently. Sometimes it is like riding a roller coaster with waves of emotion. It is important to support children when they feel sad. Allowing children to cry is as important to mental health as is eating when we are hungry, drinking when we are thirsty and sleeping when we are tired.

Grief may resurface in the future at birth and death dates, holidays, locations or other experiences that are reminders of the traumatic event. Beyond that, any concerns that an individual may be experiencing a prolonged grief response should be discussed with student services staff.