

Media Coverage of Collective Trauma & Disaster: Effects on Children & Families & Resources to Help

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Disaster and Community
Crisis Center
University of Missouri

A PARTNER IN
NCTSN

The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

AGENDA

- Overview of disasters and disaster effects
- Understanding disaster media coverage
- Youth disaster media effects research
- Resources for helping

Disaster

- A potentially traumatic event that is collectively experienced, has an acute onset, and is time-delimited
 - (McFarlane and Norris, 2006)



Disaster

- A severe disruption, ecological and psychosocial, which greatly exceeds the coping capacity of the altered community
 - (World Health Organization, 1992)



Disaster

- Natural
- Human-caused
 - Non-intentional/technological
 - Industrial accidents
 - Transportation accidents
 - Ecological/environmental destruction
 - Intentional Violence
 - Mass shooting
 - War
 - Civil strife, Ethnic conflict
 - Terrorism



Community Crises



Disaster Effects

- Disasters can harm or injure people
- Disasters can have economic effects
- Disasters can have environmental effects (built and natural)
- Disasters can have psychological effects on people.

Psychosocial Disaster Effects

Table 2–1. Common Responses to a Traumatic Event⁴

Cognitive	Emotional	Physical	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor concentration• Confusion• Disorientation• Indecisiveness• Shortened attention span• Memory loss• Unwanted memories• Difficulty making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shock• Numbness• Feeling overwhelmed• Depression• Feeling lost• Fear of harm to self or loved ones• Feeling nothing• Feeling abandoned• Uncertainty of feelings• Volatile emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nausea• Lightheadedness• Dizziness• Gastrointestinal problems• Rapid heart rate• Tremors• Headaches• Grinding of teeth• Fatigue• Poor sleep• Pain• Hyper-arousal• Jumpiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suspicion• Irritability• Arguments with friends and loved ones• Withdrawal• Excessive silence• Inappropriate humor• Increased or decreased eating• Change in sexual desire or functioning• Increased smoking• Increased substance use or abuse

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/>

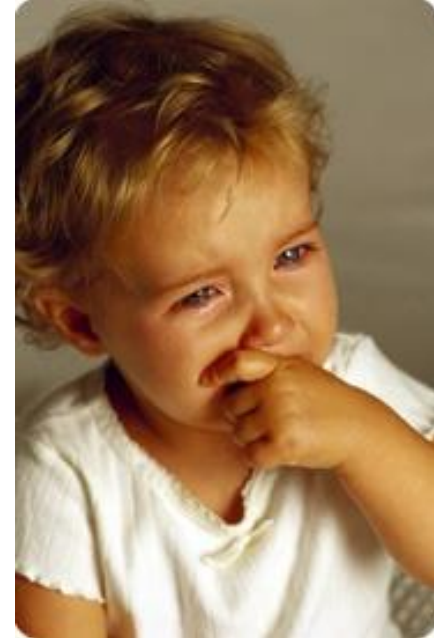
Youth Disaster Reactions

- Fear and anxiety
 - Fear of death or injury
 - Fear of losing significant others
 - Separation anxiety



Youth Disaster Reactions

- Sadness
 - Related to losses
 - Empathic sorrow
- Grief



Youth Disaster Reactions

- Anger
 - Towards the people who did it
 - Towards the people who didn't stop it



Youth Disaster Reactions

- Guilt
 - Survivor guilt
 - Real or imagined culpability
- Regret
 - Wishing to have acted differently



Youth Disaster Reactions

- Changes in behavior
 - Regression
 - Bedwetting, clinginess
 - Sleep troubles
 - Difficulty falling asleep
 - Nightmares



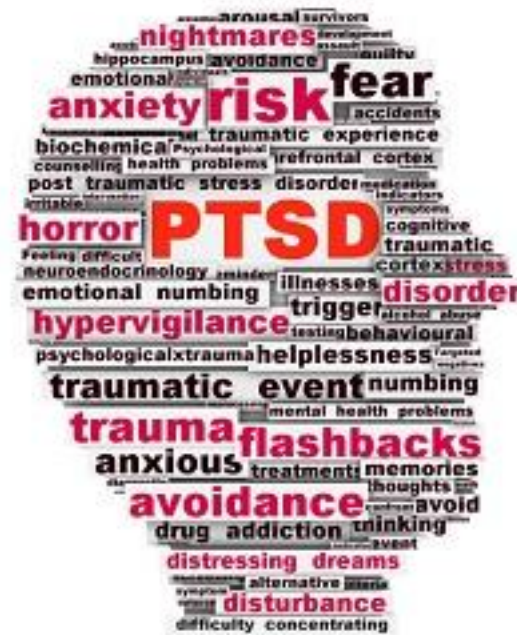
Youth Disaster Reactions

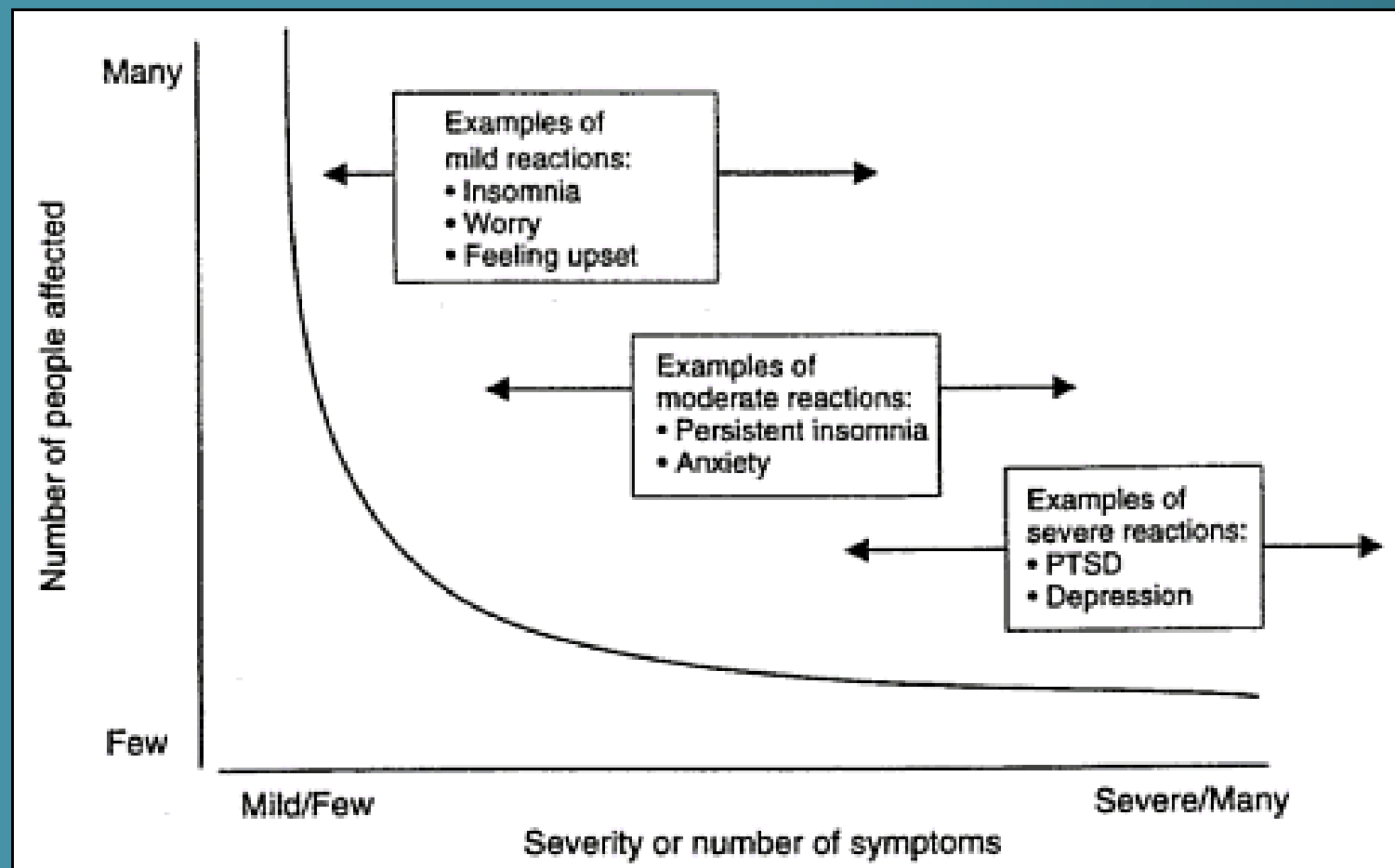
- Changes in behavior
 - Irritability
 - Impulsiveness
 - Somatic complaints
 - School problems
 - Antisocial conduct



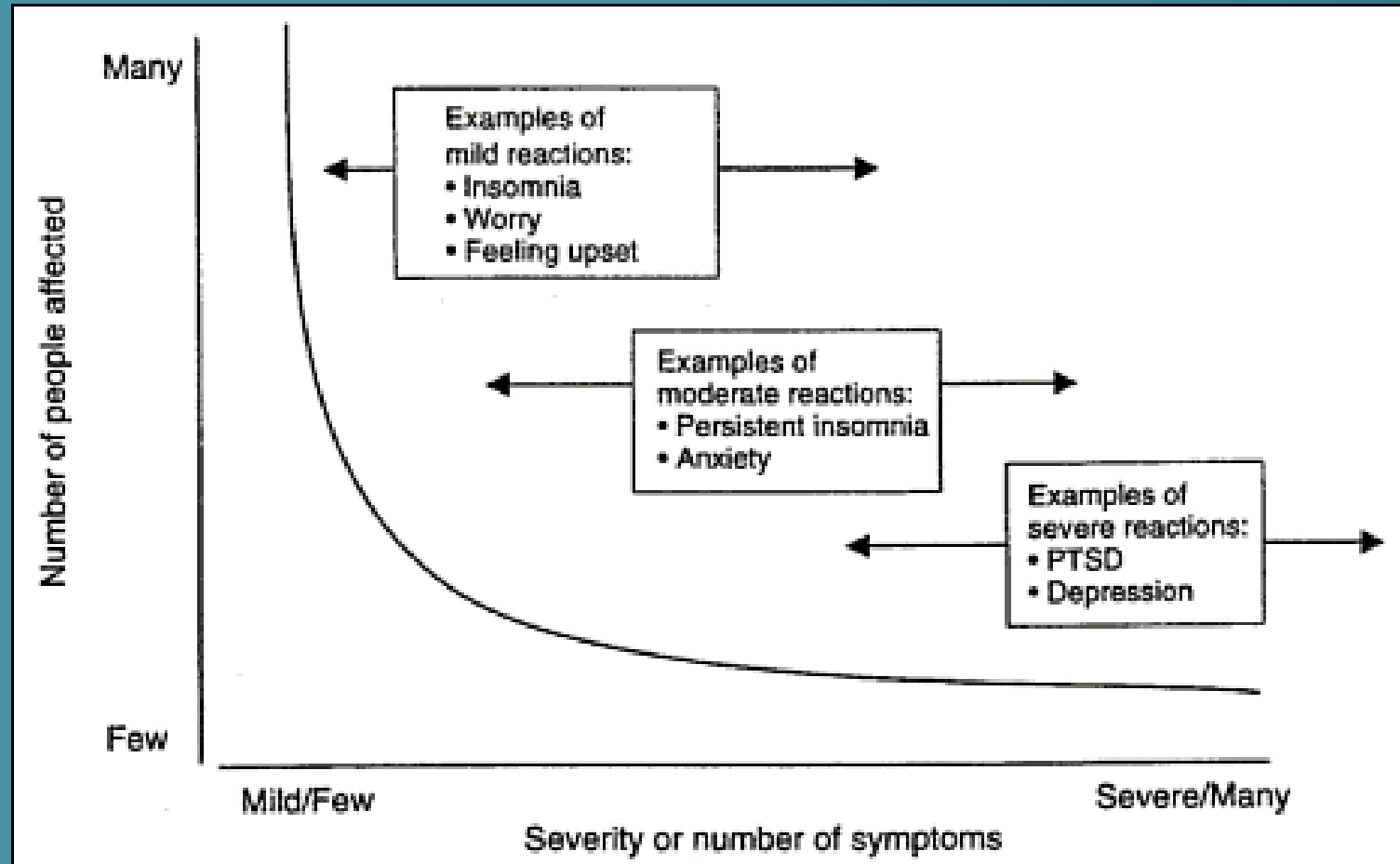
Youth Disaster Reactions

- PTSD
- Depression





Media Extend the Reach of Disaster



Understanding Disaster Media Coverage

Disaster Media Coverage

- “What average citizens and officials expect about disasters, what they come to know of ongoing disasters, and what they learn from disasters that have occurred, are primarily although not exclusively learned from mass media accounts.”
 - (Quarantelli, 1991)

Disaster Media Coverage

- News coverage of natural and manmade disasters captures the American public's attention more than any other issue.
 - (Pew Research Center 2007, 2010)



Role of Media (During a Disaster)

Tell the public what happened
(or what will happen)

Public wants to know what is happening during a disaster or crisis, and the media are there to tell that story and provide that information



Role of Media (During a Disaster)

- Watchdog
 - Keep entities accountable
 - Cause, blame, responsibility

Role of Media (During a Disaster)

- Watchdog
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 - Cause, blame, responsibility
- Objective

Role of Media (During a Disaster)

- Watchdog
 - Keep entities accountable
 - Cause, blame, responsibility
- Objective
- Generate revenue
 - Advertising, increase subscribers

Disaster Media Coverage

- Media often focuses on the most sensational aspects
 - Death
 - Injury
 - Destruction



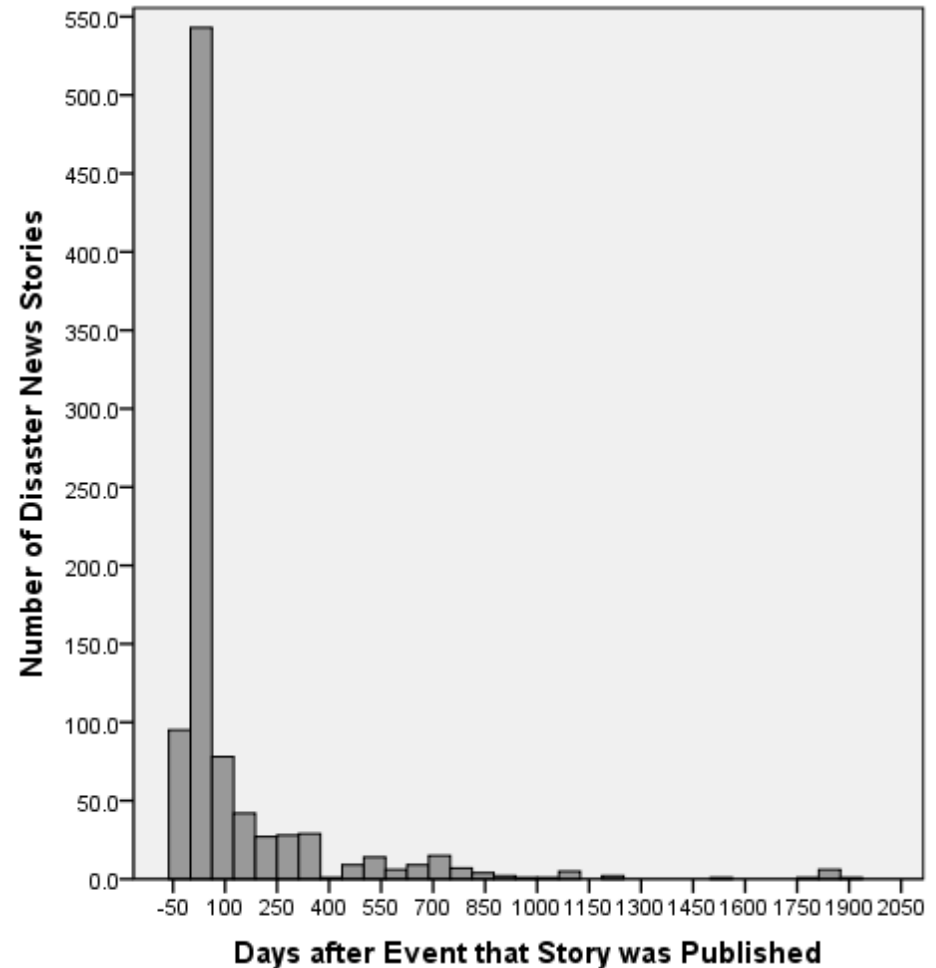
Disaster Media Coverage

- Images and video are repetitive
 - Cars overturned
 - Destroyed homes
 - Dramatic rescues



Disaster Media Coverage

- For national media, coverage of a disaster is typically short lived (Houston, Pfefferbaum, & Rosenholtz, 2012)



Effects of Disaster Media Coverage on Youth

Disaster Media Coverage

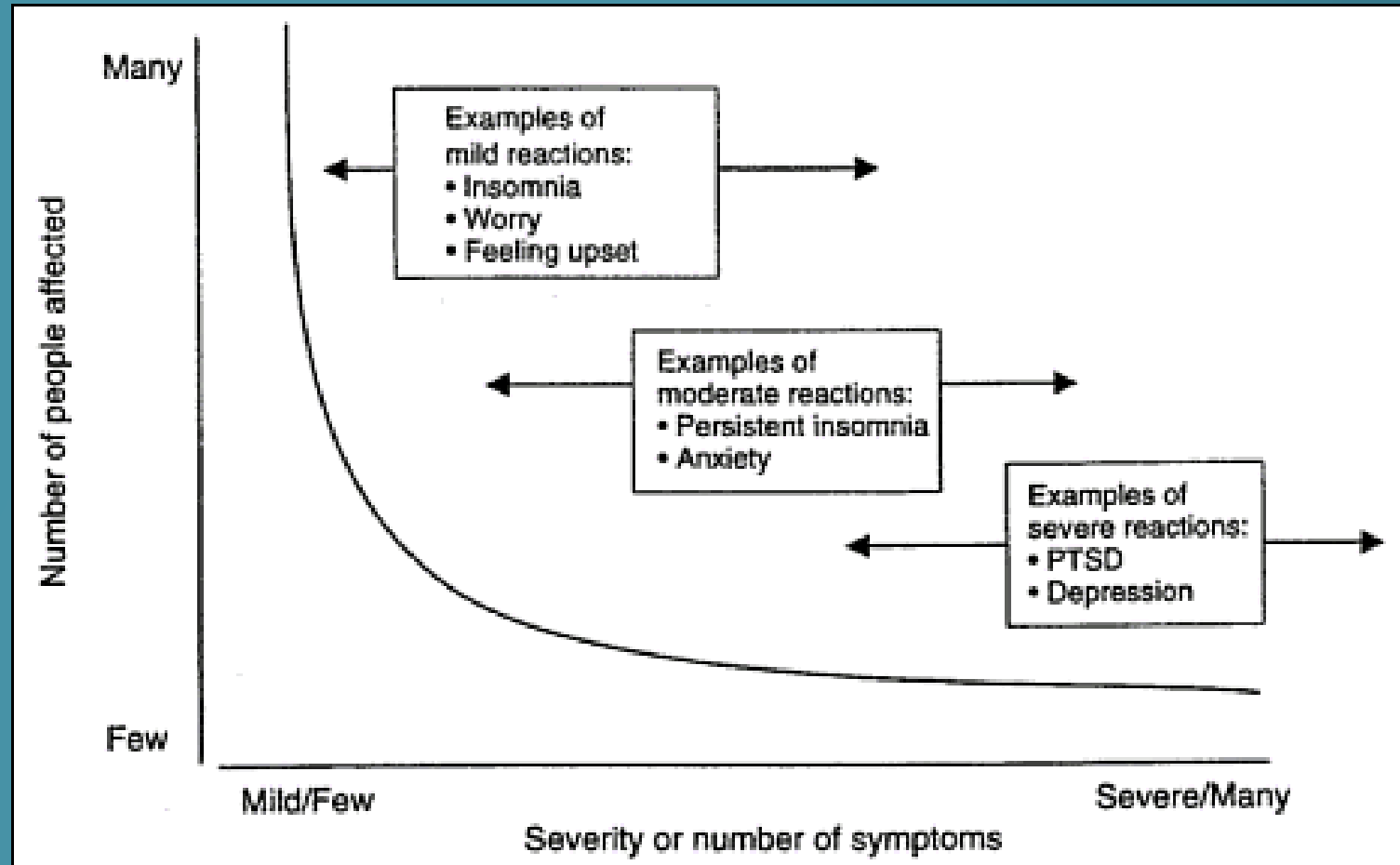
Disaster media coverage may have an effect on children and youth even if they are not directly impacted by the event



Children and Media

- Children exposed to media coverage may experience:
 - Fear
 - Anxiety
 - Distress
 - Repetitive thoughts about the event
 - Sleep Disturbances

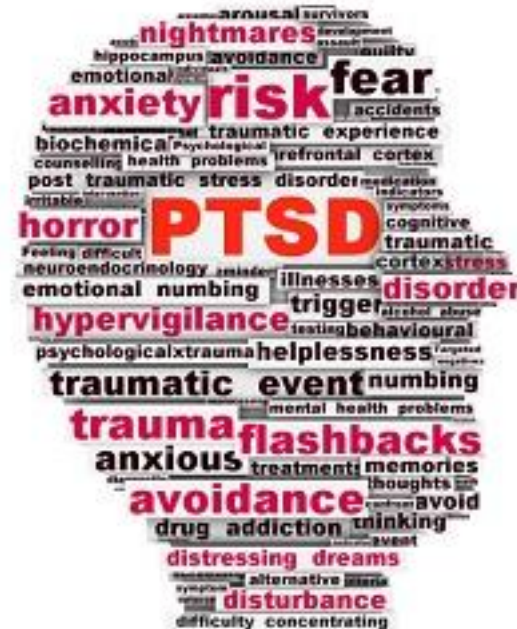
Media Extend the Reach of Disaster



Youth Disaster Reactions

PTSD in DSM-5:

- experience first-hand repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event (not through media, pictures, television or movies unless work-related)



Research

Youth and Disaster Media Coverage

Most of the research focuses on terrorism

- Review by Pfefferbaum et al. 2014 found 36 disaster media effects studies (youth and adult), of which 29 (80.6%) addressed terrorist events

Exposure

Youth and Disaster Media Coverage

- Youth exposed to a lot of coverage of the Oklahoma City bombing
 - (Pfefferbaum et al., 1999, 2002)
- And September 11 terrorist attacks
 - (Holmes, Creswell, & O'Connor, 2007; Phillips, Prince, & Schiebelhut, 2004; Saylor, Cowart, Lipovsky, Jackson, & Finch, 2003)

Youth and Disaster Media Coverage

- Approximately 1 in 5 children in Boston area watched >3 hours of TV bombing coverage on day of bombing (Comer et al., 2014)

Youth and Disaster Media Coverage

- 56% of youth (4th to 8th grade) in New Orleans who experienced Hurricane Katrina watched a lot or a whole lot of Hurricane Gustav TV coverage

Youth and Disaster Media Coverage

- Older children and male children watched more 9/11 coverage
 - (Duarte et al., 2011; Saylor et al., 2003; Schuster et al., 2001)

Youth and Disaster Media Coverage

- Oklahoma City children who lost a friend in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing watched more bombing-related television than children who did not experience a loss
 - (Pfefferbaum et al., 2000)

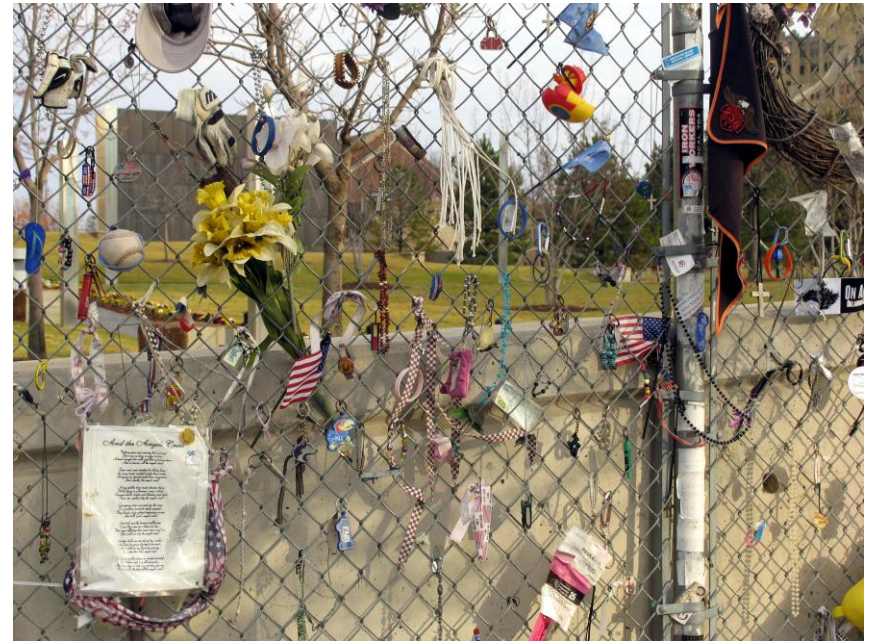
Youth and Disaster Media Coverage

- New York City children who were directly exposed to the 9/11 attacks were more likely to report “intensive” use of 9/11 coverage via television, radio, newspapers, and magazines
 - (Duarte et al., 2011)

Effects

Oklahoma City Bombing

- 7 weeks after the OKC Bombing 2,000+ middle school students in OKC were surveyed
- For children without physical or emotional exposure to the bombing, television exposure was directly related to posttraumatic stress symptomology



--Pfefferbaum et al., 2001

Two Years after OKC Bombing

- Middle school students in a community 100 miles from OKC
- Print media exposure was more strongly associated with PTSS than broadcast exposure, however both were found to be significant
- Students who reported an emotional reaction to the media coverage exhibited more stress symptoms

--Pfefferbaum et al., 2003



Two Years after OKC Bombing



- Sixty-nine 6th graders ~100 miles from Oklahoma City
- Almost 20% of those in the sample reported bomb- related difficulty functioning

--Pfefferbaum et al., 2000

Natural Disasters

- Natural disasters was found to be one of the most frightening forms of news for children
- Though the fear associated with media coverage of natural disasters decreased for children with age
 - (Cantor & Nathanson, 1996)

Israeli Youth

- In a study of Israeli residents, a majority of parents indicated that following exposure to TV coverage of a terrorist attack, their children exhibited “preoccupation with the event in speech, play, drawings, etc.”
 - (Keinan, Sadeh, & Rosen, 2003, p. 157)

September 11 terrorist attacks

- More 9/11 exposure more PTSS, more anxiety, more depression, worse behavior, reduced sense of security
 - (Aber, Gershoff, Ware, & Kotler, 2004; Cardena, Dennis, Winkel, & Skitka, 2005; Schuster et al., 2001; Hoven et al., 2005; Kennedy, Charlesworth, & Chen, 2004; Otto et al., 2007)

September 11 terrorist attacks

- Effects found for youth outside of NYC or Washington, DC
 - Michigan, Seattle, London, India
- Effects found for child report and parent report of child

Boston Marathon Bombing and Manhunt

- Parent report of youth TV exposure associated with parent report of youth PTSD symptoms, conduct problems, and total difficulties (Comer et al., 2014)
- Majority of caretakers did not restrict child's exposure to TV coverage

Meta-Analysis (Youth and Adult)

- Relationship between exposure to media coverage of terrorism AND posttraumatic stress
 - Oklahoma city bombing, 9/11, Anthrax attacks, Israeli terrorist attacks, London train bombing
- 23 studies
- 22,670 participants
- Analysis in 2009

Meta-Analysis - Results

- Effect size
 - $r = .152$ (CI = .117 to .188)
 - Cohen's $d = .31$ (small effect size)
 - comparable to the effect size documented in meta-analyses of crosssectional and longitudinal studies of viewing television violence and aggression (Anderson and Bushman, 2002)

Meta-Analysis - Results

- No differences in effect size for the different events
 - September 11, 2001 U.S. terrorist attacks
 - U.S. anthrax attack
 - Missile attacks/bombings in Israel
 - Madrid train bombing
 - Oklahoma City bombing

Meta-Analysis - Results

- Studies that measured multiple forms of media had greater effects than those that measured TV alone



Meta-Analysis - Results

- Proximity to the event (in the same city, not in the same city) was a significant moderator

Meta-Analysis - Results

- Age (adults, youth) was a significant moderator

Age and Distance



- Younger children
 - May think replays of an event are the same thing is happening over and over
 - May not understand the concept of distance from the disaster
 - Adults may not think about youth remote from event

Additional Considerations

Media Coverage Creates a Cycle



Old and New Media

Traditional Media

- Different TV stations often show similar images and video clips
- Television is regulated
- If you watch any TV coverage, no matter the station, the coverage will be similar enough to be able to generalize to what a child has seen

New Media

- Online media is often mixed media where websites may have videos, images, and text in one site
- Each webpage is different due to lack of regulation
- May be impossible to know what is encountered online
- Media can be interactive or social

Resources for Helping

Resources

dcc.missouri.edu



Disaster and Community Crisis Center

University of Missouri

Department of Communication
College Arts & Science
University of Missouri

HOME ABOUT US YOUTH & FAMILIES SCHOOLS COMMUNITIES PROFESSIONALS MEDIA & JOURNALISTS RESEARCH



Disaster and Community Crisis Center

The Disaster and Community Crisis Center (DCC) at the University of Missouri focuses on enhancing mental and behavioral health preparedness, recovery, and resilience in children, families, and communities affected by disaster.

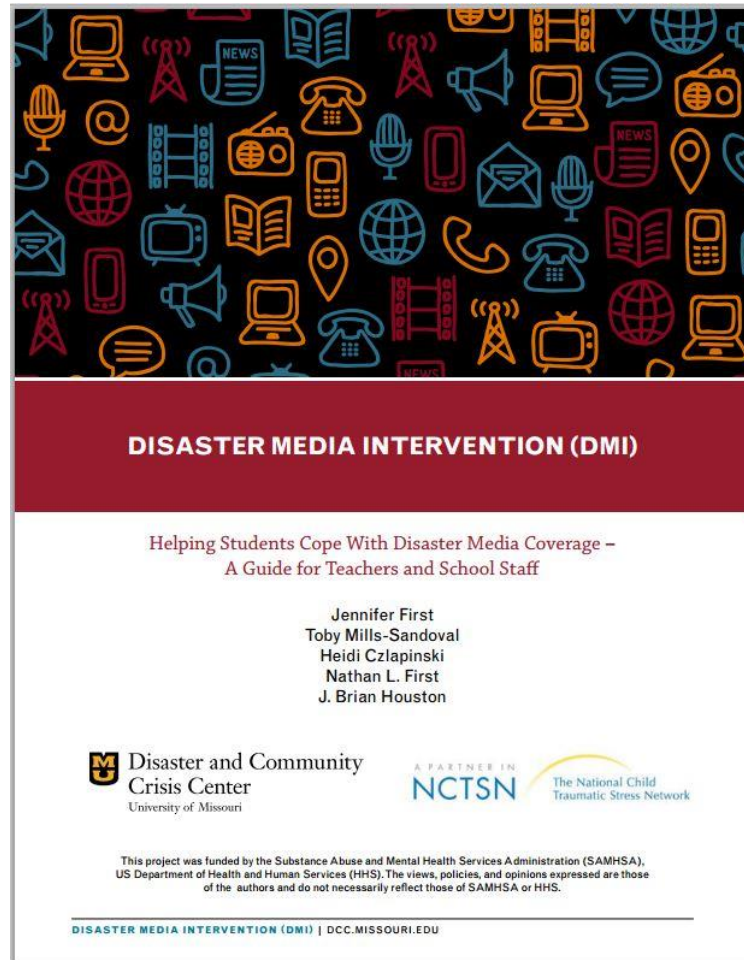
News and Upcoming Events

- New DCC Resource: Disaster Media Coverage Videos for [Parents](#) and [School Staff](#)
- New DCC Resource: [Domestic Violence and Disasters Factsheet](#)
- New DCC Resource: [Cultural Guidelines for Working With Families Who Have Experienced Sudden and Unexpected Death](#)
- Like [our FaceBook page](#) for news and updates!
- [Join our mailing list to get updated about upcoming events.](#)

Resources



Disaster Media Intervention (DMI)



Disaster Media Intervention (DMI)

HELPING STUDENTS COPE WITH DISASTER MEDIA COVERAGE

The Disaster Media Intervention (DMI) is designed to help students reduce and cope with distress related to disaster media coverage. DMI achieves these ends in part through structured activities described in the following sections. Teachers and school staff may use all of the activities described in this manual or focus on just one or two for each goal. The length of time required for these activities will depend in part on the students' collective needs and concerns. Each section includes suggested classroom activities and strategies related to these actions and goals.

In the following sections, DMI's three primary goals are addressed.

Goal 1: Encourage Dialogue

Objective: *Encourage students to talk about their feelings and concerns with a trusted adult.*

Goal 2: Establish a Sense of Safety

Objective: *Promote and enhance student safety, and provide emotional comfort and support.*

Goal 3: Develop Coping Skills

Objective: *Help students identify and learn coping skills.*

Disaster Media Intervention (DMI)

WORKSHEET:

Community Helpers MATCHING GAME

Establishing a Sense of Safety

Match the community helpers on the left to their descriptions on the right.

Paramedics

Police

Doctors and Nurses

Emergency Workers

Church/Temple Workers

Firefighters

Parents and Guardians

These people help when there is trouble. Sometimes they find people who have broken the law and put them in jail. They also help with car accidents and other emergencies.

These are the people you live with who raise you and keep you safe. It is important to talk with these people if you have questions or are feeling scared or sad about a recent disaster.

These people often drive ambulances and are the first helpers to arrive on the scene if 9-1-1 is called and there is a serious illness or injury involved.

These people are specially trained to help a community after a hurricane, tornado, or other disaster, and will sometimes come from another community to share food and supplies and to keep people safe.

These people put out fires and helps with other scary situations like car accidents. They also teach the community about fire safety and prevention.

You may find these people at a hospital or medical clinic. They are trained to make sure you feel better quickly when you are sick or get hurt.

These people help others pray or find spiritual guidance when they are frightened or sad about a recent disaster. They often open up their building as a safe place for people to go when they need shelter.

Disaster and Community Crisis Center – University of Missouri – dcc.missouri.edu

WORKSHEET:

Media Safety MESSAGE DECODER

Establishing a Sense of Safety

When you see or hear something in the media that makes you feel sad, scared, or angry, there are things that you can do. To learn about some of your choices, use the decoder key to decode the secret messages below!

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐

It is important to share your feelings with someone you love and trust.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐

You do not have to watch or listen to any media that makes you feel unsafe.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Sometimes it helps to find something else to do.

☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

You might feel better if you express your feelings through drawing, writing, dancing or singing.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Think about places and activities that make you feel happy and safe again.

Decoder Key

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Disaster and Community Crisis Center – University of Missouri – dcc.missouri.edu

Additional Resources

dcc.missouri.edu



Helping Your Child Cope with Media Coverage of Community Racial Trauma

Media coverage of community racial trauma and civil unrest can cause children to experience fear, worry, sadness, confusion, and anger. This video provides strategies for parents to help reduce distress your child may be experiencing resulting from media coverage of community racial trauma and civil unrest.

View the community racial trauma media video for parents [HERE](#).



Additional Resources

dcc.missouri.edu

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**The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network**





Building Resilience with Hunter and Eve



New Video! Click Here

<http://dcc.missouri.edu/hunter-eve>

dcc.missouri.edu/hunter-eve

Videos and Activities

Staying Safe



In this episode, Hunter learns three steps to stay safe in a disaster or emergency. Watch the video learn how you can stay safe too!

Staying Safe Guide



Parents, Teachers, Adults: This guide provides discussion starters and other information about viewing this video with children and youth.

Worksheet (Grades K to 2)



This worksheet has lots of fun activities. Complete it to learn more about Staying Safe with Hunter and Eve.

Worksheet Answer Key (K-2)



When you are done with your worksheet, check your answers here.

Coloring Sheet



Download this sheet to color a picture of Hunter, Eve, and all their friends!

Worksheet (Grades 3 to 5)



This worksheet has lots of fun activities. Complete it to learn more about Staying Safe with Hunter and Eve.

Worksheet Answer Key (3-5)



When you are done with your worksheet, check your answers here.

Name: _____

Building
Resilience
with Hunter
and Eve

Staying Safe

SUGGESTED FOR:
Grades K-2



Steps in a Disaster!

- 1 Stay calm!
- 2 Find the **safest place** you can and move there quickly!
- 3 Find **people** to be safe with —until help arrives!



Circle Me!

Circle the pictures that show the **CORRECT** way to respond in a disaster.
When you are done, color all the pictures!

1.



Chat with a friend.



Breathe in & stay calm.



Blow bubbles.

2.



Think of a safe place.



Eat some pizza.



Whistle a song.

3.



Read a book.



Take a nap.



Find others.

Name: _____

Building
Resilience
with Hunter
and Eve

Staying Safe

Coloring
Sheet



Steps in a Disaster!

- 1 Stay calm!
- 2 Find the **safest place** you can and move there quickly!
- 3 Find **people** to be safe with —until help arrives!



Staying Safe



Video, Worksheet, and Discussion Starters

In "Staying Safe" Hunter learns steps for staying safe in a disaster or emergency.

- The Hunter and Eve "Staying Safe" video and worksheets are available to view and download at: <http://dcc.missouri.edu/hunter-eve>
- "Staying Safe" worksheets include activities for youth to complete that help reinforce the "Staying Safe" steps. These worksheets should be completed after viewing the "Staying Safe" video.
- The discussion starters below can be used by parents, teachers, or other adults working with children to review, discuss, and reinforce the steps that appear in the "Staying Safe" video. Discussion starters are provided for use before and after viewing the "Staying Safe" video.

Suggested discussion starters *before* showing the "Staying Safe" video:

- What are some examples of disasters or emergency situations?
- What would you do in a disaster or emergency situation?
- How might someone feel in a disaster or emergency situation?



Suggested discussion starters *after* showing the "Staying Safe" video:

- What were the three steps in the video?
- How did Hunter stay calm in the video?


What are some examples of situations you might need to "stay calm" in?



- In Step #2 Hunter looked for a safe place. What are examples of safe places in a disaster or emergency?
- In Step #3 Hunter found other people to stay safe with. Who are safe people you know that you can stay safe with?




Additional Resources

dartcenter.org

**DART CENTER FOR JOURNALISM & TRAUMA**
A PROJECT OF COLUMBIA JOURNALISM SCHOOL

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Mae Ryan details the collaboration between The Guardian U.S. and The Texas Observer, as Glenn Smith and Andrea McDaniels look on.

In Depth

Award Winners Offer Advice on Covering Trauma

The 2015 Dart Awards roundtable discussion got under the hood of each of the winning pieces; drilled down on what's involved in undertaking hard-hitting, humane investigations of trauma, high-impact collaborations and innovative approaches to reporting. Honorees Melissa del Bosque, Andrea McDaniels, Mae Ryan, Glenn Smith and David Wood shared tips on covering violence, building trust and self-care.

[Read more](#)

RELATED:

[2015 Dart Award Winners Announced](#)

[Telling the Hardest Stories](#)

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TIPS & TOOLS

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[Homicide](#)

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PUBLICATIONS

OTHER LANGUAGES

JOIN THE DART NETWORK


**DARTBLOG**

Mon, 06/15/2015 - 4:14pm

OSCE Kicks Off Conference on Journalist Safety, Press Freedom & Pluralism in Conflict Zones


The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe kicked off its conference in Vienna today on journalist safety, media freedom and pluralism in times of conflict. Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, delivered opening remarks. [More »](#)


[Post a comment](#)

**DARTMEDIA**

Faith Healing in Kashmir

By Robert Nickelsberg and Judith Matloff



**DONATE**

DART CENTER EVENTS

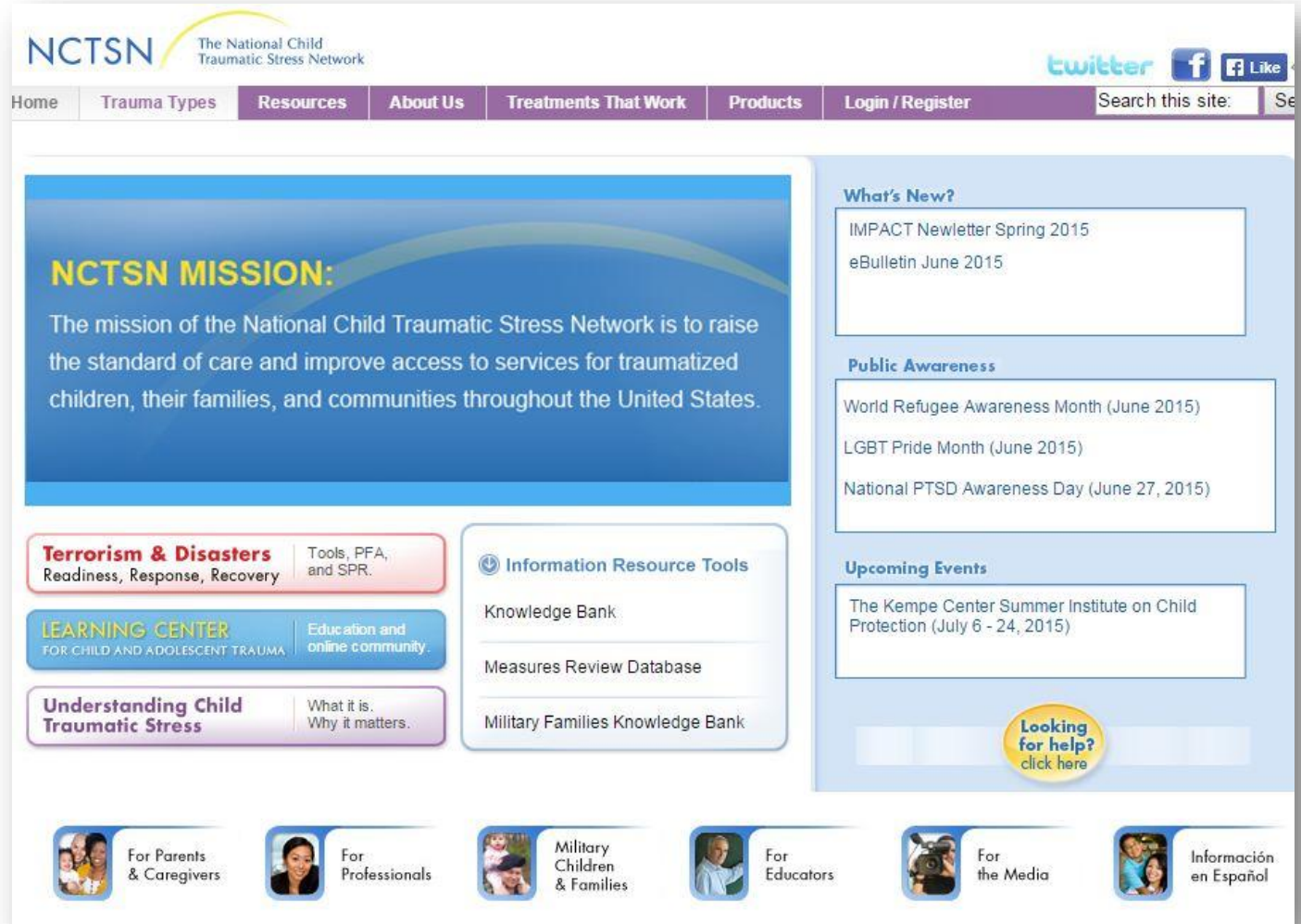
All events [North America](#)

Jul 6 2015 - Jul 18 2015
North America

Summer Institute: Global Mental Health & Psychosocial Support

Additional Resources

nctsn.org



The screenshot shows the NCTSN website homepage. At the top is the NCTSN logo with the tagline 'The National Child Traumatic Stress Network'. To the right are social media links for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: Home, Trauma Types, Resources, About Us, Treatments That Work, Products, and Login / Register. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a large blue box with the 'NCTSN MISSION' statement. Below this are several resource boxes: 'Terrorism & Disasters' (Readiness, Response, Recovery), 'LEARNING CENTER' (FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT TRAUMA), 'Understanding Child Traumatic Stress', and 'Information Resource Tools' (Knowledge Bank, Measures Review Database, Military Families Knowledge Bank). On the right side, there are sections for 'What's New?' (IMPACT Newsletter Spring 2015, eBulletin June 2015), 'Public Awareness' (World Refugee Awareness Month, LGBT Pride Month, National PTSD Awareness Day), and 'Upcoming Events' (The Kempe Center Summer Institute on Child Protection). A yellow circular button labeled 'Looking for help? click here' is also visible. At the bottom, there are six icons representing different user groups: For Parents & Caregivers, For Professionals, Military Children & Families, For Educators, For the Media, and Información en Español.

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Home Trauma Types Resources About Us Treatments That Work Products Login / Register Search this site: Se

NCTSN MISSION:

The mission of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network is to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families, and communities throughout the United States.

Terrorism & Disasters Tools, PFA, and SPR.
Readiness, Response, Recovery

LEARNING CENTER Education and online community.
FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT TRAUMA

Understanding Child Traumatic Stress What it is. Why it matters.

Information Resource Tools

- Knowledge Bank
- Measures Review Database
- Military Families Knowledge Bank

What's New?

- IMPACT Newsletter Spring 2015
- eBulletin June 2015

Public Awareness

- World Refugee Awareness Month (June 2015)
- LGBT Pride Month (June 2015)
- National PTSD Awareness Day (June 27, 2015)

Upcoming Events

- The Kempe Center Summer Institute on Child Protection (July 6 - 24, 2015)

Looking for help? click here

For Parents & Caregivers For Professionals Military Children & Families For Educators For the Media Información en Español

Thank you – Questions?