

Parents in Emergency

Protecting our children and ourselves — because children need present parents



You are the most important people for your children because you are **PRESENT, CONSISTENT, and TRUSTWORTHY**. Children don't need perfect parents — they need parents who demonstrate how to cope. **Your presence is the foundation of their security.**

☺ Reactions by Age — What to Expect and What to Do

👶 Infants & Toddlers

Ages 0-6

Common Distress Signs

- Regression: bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, clinginess
- Excessive crying without clear reason
- Difficulty sleeping, nightmares
- Unexplained physical complaints, sudden aggression

What to Do

- Keep a consistent, familiar routine
- Increase hugs and soothing physical contact
- Use a calm, clear, reassuring voice
- "We are safe here, and I am with you"
- Engage through drawing, play, and movement

🎒 Elementary School

Ages 6-12

Common Distress Signs

- Difficulty learning, concentration issues
- Reverting to younger behavior patterns
- Many questions about death and safety
- Physical complaints before school; separation anxiety

What to Do

- Make eye contact, get down to their level
- Explain what they hear in simple, true words
- Allow drawing and play — for expression
- "The soldiers and police are protecting us"
- Keep school routine and sleeping hours
- Encourage questions — and answer them honestly

👧 Adolescents

Ages 12-18

Common Distress Signs

- Social withdrawal, shutting down in their room
- Consuming obsessive or negative news
- Extreme mood swings, increased aggression
- Decreased functioning and motivation; worry about future

What to Do

- Open conversation — don't force it
- Show you care privately and authentically
- Set group boundaries on news-checking
- Share your feelings too, within reason
- Maintain peer connections; acknowledge their feelings

💬 What to Say — and What to Avoid

"Even I'm a little scared, but we're together and safe."

✓ **Authentic, connects, builds security**

"What are you feeling? I'd love to listen."

✓ **Opens conversation in a safe way**

"I don't know everything, but I'm right here with you."

✓ **Honest, close, not disconnecting**

Avoid saying: "Don't worry / There's nothing to fear" (dismisses feelings) · "Be strong / Don't cry" (shame around emotions) · "Everything will be fine" (false promises) · "It's perfectly normal" (contradicts their experience). Children know things are happening — **it's better to acknowledge the truth with empathy and honesty.**

🏠 Daily Routine with Emotional Comfort

- 1 Routine = Emotional Anchor:** Keep set times for meals, sleep, and learning. Even when everything feels different — predictability calms your child's nervous system and signals safety.
- 2 Create an "Emotional Kit":** Gather beloved items — a toy, music, headphones, a book. For a younger child: a hug, a game, a phone call. For a teen: personal space and tools that soothe deeply.
- 3 Fixed Comfort Rituals:** A bedtime story, a warm drink, a song together — small things that return every day become the "anchor" in stormy times. Help them anchor in you.
- 4 Limit News Exposure:** Under 10 — not at all. Over 10 — only accompanied by a parent. A child left alone processes far more frightening content than reality offers.

💖 Taking Care of Yourself — It's Not Selfish, It's Mandatory

🚩 Red Flags — Seek Help

- Not sleeping for several nights in a row
- Feeling you've "fallen apart" in front of the children
- Anger outbursts you can't control
- Loss of basic daily functioning
- Thoughts of harming yourself

✔ What Helps You

- 15-20 minutes daily for yourself — essential
- Talk with a trusted friend or family member
- Sleep — even when it's difficult
- Brief physical activity
- Ask for help when you need it — it models strength for your children
- Talk with your partner about shared feelings

Remember: You don't have to know everything or have all the answers. You need to be **present, connected, and honest**. A child who sees their parent coping — even imperfectly — grows up to be resilient.

📞 Mental Health & Resilience Support Lines

5486

National Resilience Center — Israeli Trauma Coalition

Referral to community services and local mental health support · israeltraumacoalition.org

sahar.org.il
SAHAR

Anonymous emotional support · 24/7 chat

1800-363-363
NATAL

Trauma & stress center · 24/7 · Free

1201

WhatsApp: 052-8451201

ERAN

Emotional first aid · 24/7 · Free · Also Arabic & Russian

02-5844457
Hadassah

Trauma care unit for children & youth

08-6552344
TAMAR

For the Arab community · Phone & WhatsApp

📍 Regional Resilience Centers

Sderot

08-6611150 / 08-6611140

Eshkol

08-9965264

Sdot Negev

050-5727378

Sha'ar HaNegev

051-2266275

Ashkelon

*2542

Hof Ashkelon

08-6576728

Aman (Netivot, Mercavim, Bnei Shimon)

055-3063863

Etzion

058-3989550

Ofakim

054-8220057

Yehuda

055-9534177 / 02-9969560

Shomron

055-2779285

Binyamin

106

Bedouin Community (South)
072-2212788



Wadi Ara Community Resilience Center
054-2296030



Always remember: Asking for help is **strength, not weakness**. You don't have to go through this alone. Mental health professionals are here for you.

📞 **5486 National Resilience Center**

<https://israeltraumacoalition.org>

Israeli Trauma Coalition