

# Montclair Health Associates



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Montclair Health Associates offers a wide range of health services including psychotherapy, clinical hypnotherapy, nutritional, behavioral, diabetes & weight management counseling with offices in Montclair, Englewood, and Roseland, N.J. Weight management services for children and adults are provided through Y.E.S., Youths Eating Smart program- Julie Jaskiewicz, R.D., and Judy Amir, L.C.S.W., program managers. All hours and services are scheduled by appointment. Many insurances accepted.

## HEALTHY COMMUNICATING AFTER A TRAUMA

**F**ollowing a trauma, some people may develop an acute reaction to seeing or experiencing a frightening event. The person's age will affect how the event is experienced. For example, a young child may refuse to go to school and become more "clingy" in behavior. An adolescent may become more argumentative while minimizing her/his concerns. Adults may withdraw, express feeling "numb" or in "shock" and become preoccupied with the events of the trauma. Common reactions include disbelief, denial, anxiety, relief, grief, hostility, and altruism. Somatic problems such as loss of appetite, headaches, and sleep disturbances are commonly observed. Some of these reactions may take weeks, and possibly months, to appear.

### *Important Factors in Response to a Trauma:*

Children and families are having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.

Grief reactions peak within days of the event and then wane over weeks and months

Calmly providing emotional support to children and families is significant to reducing fear. Use words a child can understand when discussing traumatic events

All fears need to be treated as genuine and, talking should be encouraged

Maintain a structured and predictable schedule as best as is possible. Children benefit from order when their routines have been disrupted

Feelings of sadness and anxiety are common for all age groups after a trauma

Depression (persistent symptoms) is not the same as sadness, which is usual after a trauma. Consider seeking counseling should depression persist

Guilt feelings may arise and attempts to assign blame to oneself are counterproductive

Rebuilding lives, families, and communities is what is important

Explain that all is being done that can be done to return to normal life

Caretakers should communicate to children that they have done everything to keep them safe, that this violence is over, and it is isolated to specific areas

Terrorist acts are reckless acts of desperation and dread performed to create a traumatic response

Lashing out with hostility will only cause more harm, possibly to innocent people

Overexposure to the media can itself be traumatizing; avoid repetitious viewing of news footage

Answer questions reassuringly but honestly

Accept that trauma has painful procedures and that most people are "good"

Increase time together as a family, encourage connectedness, and schedule family events, including time for exercise which has shown to reduce stress

Providing comfort and support over time will help; try not to expect an immediate positive response