

I-CART

Indiana Crisis Assistance Response Team

What Staff and Adults Need to Know About Adult Reactions

1. Although responses often focus heavily on children, adults can have similar reactions to death and loss. Unfortunately, adults have had more practice masking it.
2. Post-traumatic stress reactions are common. Post-traumatic stress reactions often create additional reactions and reactions that are different from grief responses.
3. Adults do not need to be a victim or the witness to an event or loss. The adult's past history with trauma and loss, and the recent occurrence of a loss can have a significant impact.
4. Car accidents, house fires, serious surgical procedures, severe illness of self or family member, terminal illness of a loved one, divorce, separation from a child, loss of a parent, family difficulties, economic concerns, the threat of violence or disturbing rumors, national events, plane crashes, natural disasters, and terrorism can all induce loss reactions or trauma reactions in an adult, as well as in a child.
5. The same factors that put a child at high risk can also put an adult at high risk.
6. A family trauma can traumatize the entire family. Each member of that family will have his/her own individual reactions. Role changes in a family can produce feelings of loss. Staff members in a school are members of that 'school family' and similar reactions and dynamics can be experienced.
7. Similar reactions to loss will be intense for some and not for others. Again, each person grieves in his or her own way and on his or her own timetable.
8. The longer an adult who has been significantly impacted by a trauma or loss goes without trauma specific help the more chronic and severe those reactions may become.
9. Not every psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, counselor or doctor knows what trauma is or how best to help.
10. Crisis intervention, although helpful, does not take the place of counseling or therapy when it is needed. Crisis intervention is not counseling or therapy.
11. Adults need to be extended patience, understanding and acceptance as well as children. Adults need safety, security and basic nurturing addressed as well as children.
12. A traumatic event can impact a family, church, neighborhood, or community the same way it can impact a school.
13. A period of 18-24 months is not an uncommon time period for a child or an adult to

move through initial grief reactions to loss.

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