**Reference 1A**

# Common Initial Post-crisis Reactions (Children)

It is common for children to have the following physiological, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and social reactions towards a crisis incident. Under most of the circumstances, with the support from family members, teachers and peers, these commonly seen reactions will abate gradually in a few days or a few weeks. If children are observed to have excessively intense or continuous reactions (refer to Appendix 1D), parents and teachers should seek help from professionals.

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| **Physiological** | **Cognitive** |
| Somatic complaints (e.g. headaches, upset stomach) | Impaired concentration |
| Change of appetite (e.g. suddenly eat much more or less than usual) | Repeated flashbacks of the traumatic scene |
| Sleep disturbance | Nightmares |
| Fatigue or loss of energy | Self-blaming and feeling worried |
| Nervousness (e.g. rapid heartbeat, sweating, muscle tension) | Do not understand the concept of death (e.g. believe that the deceased will come back or not aware that all living things will die) |
| **Emotional** | **Behavioural** |
| Feeling sad (e.g. depressed, being uncommunicative) | Talking about and repeatedly ask about death |
| Feeling panicked, insecure or fearful (e.g. fear of darkness, monster and strangers) | Repetitive behaviour, e.g. demonstrate the traumatic incident in play, talk about the traumatic incident repeatedly |
| Feeling angry, disappointed, guilty and helpless | Avoiding places, people, and activities that are related to the traumatic incident |
| Being emotionally unstable, with more ups and downs than usual (e.g. becoming irritable, annoyed, tearful and emotional) | Regression in behaviour and exhibiting behaviour that are not age-appropriate (e.g. bed wetting, soiling, finger sucking and difficulty in speaking) |
| Feeling emotionally numb | Drop in assessment and homework performance |
|  | School refusal |
| **Social** |  |
| More dependent behaviour than usual (e.g. stay closely with parents or carers, have separation anxiety) |  |
| Alienation and opposition (e.g. being uncooperative, showing more frequent temper tantrum, excessive crying, screaming and showing aggressive behaviour) |  |
| Being withdrawn, unwilling to play or talk with other people |  |