

**INSERT YOUR
LOGO HERE**



**INSERT YOUR CONTACT
INFORMATION HERE**

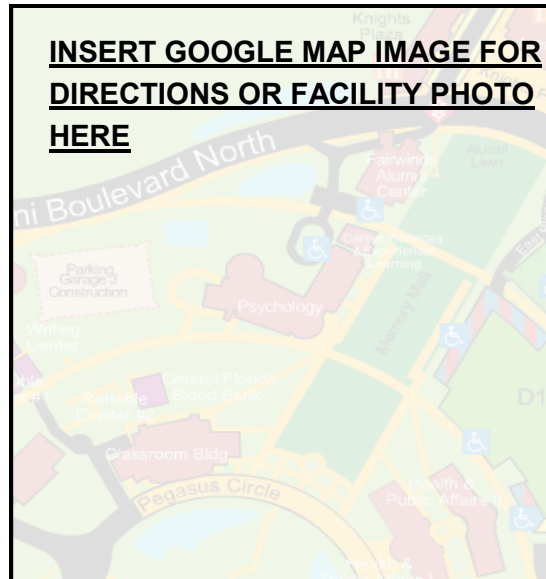
**NAME OF ORGANIZATION
HERE**

**INSERT ADDRESS
INSERT WEBSITE URL HERE**

Directions

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DIRECTIONS OR FACILITY PHOTO
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**INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME
HERE**

In the Aftermath of Trauma

Trauma not only affects the person at the scene. It also affects families and communities.

Here are some ways you can help your family deal with traumatic events.



Balloons to Heaven

There are many ways to help people deal with traumatic loss but for children one way is to "send a message to heaven"

- ✓ Provide a balloon (already filled) and a marker
- ✓ Allow the child to write or draw a message to someone in heaven or just to heaven (no peeking by adults)
- ✓ Adults often like to write on the balloon and send a message of their own
- ✓ Together, release the balloon and watch the message be delivered to heaven

For help please contact us at
(INSERT PHONE NUMBER)

INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME HERE

If you have been touched by a traumatic event, you may feel significant stress. You may have nightmares and cannot sleep. You have lost your appetite. You cannot stop thinking about what happened. Even if they were not there at the event, your family may be suffering too. They are dealing with their own feelings and they are worried about you. Families, and even strangers, want to help. They often just do not know what to do or say.

One of the best ways that people naturally deal with trauma is known as “tend and befriend.” When we are under significant stress, we are likely to:

- ✓ Tend—we behave in ways to protect others, particularly our own children, other children and people who are vulnerable or hurt
- ✓ Befriend—seek out/join groups the serve to defend the vulnerable or work for positive social change



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Here are some things for you and your family to remember during the recovery process

1. Remember that everyone has been touched by the traumatic event in some way. When someone wants to talk -
 - ✓ listen supportively,
 - ✓ do not probe for details or try to get them to “grieve,”
 - ✓ let the person say what they want to say – do not push for more, and
 - ✓ remind them that recovery takes time – all feelings are normal and natural to the recovery process.
2. Offer practical support
 - ✓ offer to run errands, get groceries
 - ✓ offer to do housework, watch the children for a few hours
3. Offer opportunities for socialization or relaxation
 - ✓ suggest engaging in an activity that is typically enjoyed—walking, bowling, going for food
 - ✓ offer to join them at an event related to the trauma or a related social cause-participation in these groups may be very empowering

Specific tips to help children and adolescents cope with trauma

1. Depending on their age, children may not fully understand the meaning of death. You may need to choose your words to match your child’s age and level of understanding. You can help your child cope if you:
 - ✓ limit media exposure to the aftermath of the event
 - ✓ ask them if they want to talk about what happened and follow their lead—tell them the truth but without all the graphic details
2. Children do not typically sit down and just “talk” to someone—talk typically occurs with an activity such as playing basketball, coloring or perhaps even riding in the car
 - ✓ Use these times/activities to start the conversation
 - ✓ ask children if they want to talk about what happened—so do not force them to talk
 - ✓ acknowledge the presence of bad people in the world but you, other adults and particularly first responders will protect them and keep them safe. There are many more good people than bad people
3. Look on the other side for one more tip to help children deal with trauma or loss