

## A Guide to Caregiving Following a Stressful Event



1. **Take Care of Yourself:** In order to help your child during or following a stressful event, you need to help yourself first. Children learn how to respond and cope by watching others. If you are calm in the face of stress, this may help your child learn how to handle the same event in a more healthy way.

### What does this mean?

1. Tune into your own emotions. Monitor how you handle daily interactions with your child, especially times that might increase your stress (e.g., your child tantruming in the grocery store). If you are feeling too stressed or upset, take a break or calm yourself in the moment in a healthy way.
  2. Identify potential triggers for your stress: For example, can you easily handle when your child is aggressive but struggle when your child is crying? Identifying your “hot buttons” and adjusting your way of handling these situations will help you react in a more healthy way. List an example of one of your “hot buttons” below:
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Identify and practice healthy coping skills: When you are upset, what do you do to feel better? Many people find that **Taking a Few Slow Breaths** helps them cope when stressed. **Calling a friend/neighbor** or **Taking a 5-minute Break** in another room may also help. Identify 3 ways you can help yourself feel better when you are upset below:
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Ask for Help:** If you realize that you are having a hard time following a stressful event, it’s ok to ask for help. Knowing when you need help and asking for it is a sure sign that you are giving your child the best care possible. Resources such as **The Disaster Distress Helpline (1-800-985-5990)** provides immediate crisis support to people affected by stressful events in the community. Please feel free to also call our clinic at **(410) 328-5881** with any additional referral needs (e.g., crisis response, therapy).