

# ALLOW CHILDREN TO FEEL THEIR BIG FEELINGS

## (AND CAREGIVERS TOO)



After any traumatic event we all experience big feelings. It can be hard to watch and support children when parents and caregivers are feeling them too! It's okay to share those feelings with children and together work on ways to help feel better.

Use the suggestion from the infographic or come up with your own. You know your child best and what will work for them and you.

### LISTEN:

Listen to your child, look them in the eye and give them your full attention. This will help them feel safe.

### DISCUSS:

Provide a safe space for children to share their thoughts, feelings and worries with you. Try not minimize feelings with statements like "it's okay" or "Don't worry." Instead validate their feelings and experiences by naming emotions and stating what they are doing well or asking what they need from you.

- "You are very frustrated. I really like how you are taking deep breaths"
- "I can see how sad you feel. Would you like a hug?"

### PRACTICE:

Practice together an activity that grounds children; [breathing](#), coloring, or movement. Creating the space to practice tools with a trusted caregiver will empower children to use the tool when feeling overwhelmed or struggling with big feelings.

### REFLECT:

Reflect back to children what you heard them say or what you think they are expressing. This gives feelings a name and way for them to identify those feelings again.



Scan this code for more disaster resources!