

Urgent Services

Helping children cope: Tips for talking about tragedy

After a tragedy, you might feel helpless – but your child needs your support.

Here's help knowing what to say by Mayo Clinic Staff:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/helping-children-cope/art-20047029>

When a tragedy occurs, it can be hard to know how to talk to your child about what happened. What do you say? How much will they understand? Find out how to start the conversation and what you can do to help your child cope.

Do I need to talk to my child about a tragedy?

Talking to your child about a tragedy can help them understand what's happened, feel safe and begin to cope.

If you don't speak to your child about a tragedy, there's a good chance that they might hear about it from someone else – whether from the news, the radio, social media, friends, or family. Not talking about a tragedy also might give your child the sense that what happened is too horrible to talk about, which could make the event seem even more threatening.

How do I start a conversation with my child about a tragedy?

There's not necessarily a right or wrong way to talk to your child about a tragic event. Start by taking time to think about what you want to say.

When you're ready, choose a time when your child is most likely to want to talk, such as at bedtime. You might start by asking your child what he or she already knows about the tragedy. What has your child heard in school or seen on TV? Ask your child what questions or concerns they might have. Let your child's answers guide your discussion.

Do your best to make your child feel comfortable asking questions and discussing what happened. However, don't force your child to talk if they aren't ready.

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How do I explain the tragedy to my child?

When talking to your child about a tragedy, tell the truth. Focus on the basics and avoid sharing unnecessary details. Don't exaggerate or speculate about what might happen. Avoid dwelling on the scale or scope of the tragedy.

Listen closely to your child for misinformation, misconceptions, and underlying fears. Take time to provide accurate information. Share your own thoughts and remind your child that you're there for him or her. Also, be sure to explain to your child that the event isn't his or her fault.

Your child's age will play a major role in how he or she processes information about a tragedy. Consider these tips:

Preschool children: Get down to your child's eye level. Speak in a calm and gentle voice using words your child understands. Explain what happened and how it might affect your child.

For example, after a severe storm you might say that a tree fell on electrical wires and now the lights don't work. Share steps that are being taken to keep your child safe.

Give your child plenty of hugs.

Elementary and early middle school children: Children in this age range might have more questions about whether they're truly safe. They might also need help separating fantasy from reality.

Upper middle school and high school children: Older children will want more information about the tragedy and recovery efforts. They're more likely to have strong opinions about the causes, as well as suggestions about how to prevent future tragedies and a desire to help those affected.

Be prepared to repeat information that might be hard for your child to understand or accept. If your child asks the same question repeatedly, keep in mind that he or she might be looking for reassurance.

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Bridge on 20th

Ph: (306) 382-2855

office@thebridgesaskatoon.com

1008 - 20th St W, Saskatoon SK S7M 0Y7

The Bridge is a Christian Street mission influencing change in Saskatoon's inner city. They provide meals, showers, clothing, haircuts, life-skills development, programming, and accountability for those living in the cycle of addictions.

Crisis Nursery

Ph: (306) 242-2433

1020 Victoria Avenue, Saskatoon SK, S7N 0Z8

The crisis nursery can provide help and comfort for any family experiencing a form of crisis. They are open 24/7, 365 days a year. Parents are able to bring their children to the crisis nursery for a couple of days while they focus their energy on resolving the crisis or emergency at hand. They also offer a 24-hour crisis line, referrals to other agencies and services that can help with resolving the crisis.

EGADZ – Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre

Ph: (306) 931-6644 (306) 665-1344

www.egadz.ca

485 1st Avenue North Saskatoon, SK, S7K 1X5

EGADZ provides a wide range of programs and supportive residential programs that offer safety, mentorship, and support to youth. Programs empower youth and assist them to reach their full potential.

Programs offered include:

- **YOUTH DROP-IN CENTRE** offers recreational activities and an on-site kitchen to teach nutrition and provide a meal every day at 5:00 p.m. The drop-in center also operates education programs, cultural programs, and employment programs.
- **TEEN PARENT PROGRAM** provides educational outreach, medical and crisis services, and individual and group sessions for expectant parents and their children.
- **STREET OUTREACH PROGRAM** connects with youth through use of an outreach van that operates after hours. Immediate assistance provided includes nutrition, clothing, condoms, personal hygiene items, baby formula and diapers.
- **OPERATION HELP** for youth involved in the sex trade, including immediate supports upon involvement with the justice system, assistance to connect with community support and supports to assist with lifestyle change.
- **JOE AND JOSIE'S GARAGE** to support aboriginal youth through life skills, mentorship, and elder support to build healthy interpersonal relationships.
- **RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS** for youth in the care of the MSS. Programs offer

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supportive living environment in a home-like setting for youth exiting high risk street lifestyle, and/ or who need supports to safely parent their children. Programming is offered to all individuals including life skills, parenting skills, support for addiction, education around domestic violence, and access to counselling supports.

- The Residential Programs are:
- **13 MY HOMES** - supportive independent living environment for youth involved with MSS.
- **BABY STEPS & MAH'S PLACE** – supportive environment where mothers can work towards having child(ren) safely returned to their care with supervision. Mothers and babies reside in a separate residence side by side and are provided with the opportunity to bond. Moms learn to care for their children with support, structure, and guidance.

Emergency Placement Program– CUMFI

Ph: (306) 975-9999

cumfiadmin@sasktel.net

www.cumfi.org

315 Avenue M S, Saskatoon SK, S7M 2K5

Provides support to families with children who are at risk of going into care of the Ministry. The home-like environment is a place of safety for those families at risk, reducing the number of children going into care and preserving the family unit.

Epilepsy Saskatoon

Ph: (306) 665-1939 Toll Free: 1-866-EPILEPSY

epilepsysaskatoon@sasktel.net

www.epilepsymatters.com

114 Maxwell Cres, Saskatoon, SK S7L 3Y2

Offers programs to improve education and public awareness about epilepsy, as well as support groups for people with epilepsy and their families.

Family Service Saskatoon

Ph: (306) 244-0127 Fax (306) 244-1201

www.familyservice.sk.ca

102 – 506 - 25th Street East, Saskatoon, SK S7K 4A7

Offers individual, couple, child, and family counselling to the community. Special programming: Teen and Young Parents, Youth Exposed to Violence, Abuse and Beyond for women, Invisible Scars for women, as well as educational and therapy groups addressing perceived community needs. Variable fee for services.

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Friendship Inn – Saskatoon

Ph: (306) 242-5122 Fax: (306) 242-1291

www.friendshipinn.ca

619 - 20th St W, Saskatoon SK, S7M 0X8

A soup kitchen that provides nutritious meals daily for the transient, homeless, and less fortunate 365 days of the year.

Hands-On Street Ministries

Ph: (306) 653-4182

info@handsonoutreach.ca

www.handsonministries.com

140 Avenue F N, Saskatoon SK, S7L 1V8

Hands-On Ministries is dedicated to serving the needs of Saskatoon's inner city street people. Support includes meals, a clothing depot, skill developments, mentoring through the auto body shop, and billiards.

The Salvation Army Bethany Home

Ph: (306) 244-6758

info@salvationarmysaskatoon.org

www.bethanyhome.ca

Exists for the benefit of female youth in crisis from age 12 to 18, as well as pregnant and parenting mothers and their children. We provide a safe, stable, nurturing residential setting. Bethany Home offers life skills education in a wide variety of areas, and support for the individual. Requires MSS referral.

Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service (Mobile Crisis)

Ph: (306) 933-6200 (24 hr)

www.saskatooncrisis.ca

313 Ontario Ave, Saskatoon SK, S7K 1S3

Provides 24-hour crisis intervention, crisis counselling, and conflict management to individuals and families in distress or crisis. Service is provided in the office or in the community, free of charge.

Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre

Ph: (306) 664-6565 Fax: (306) 664-6563

Receptionist@saskatoonfoodbank.ca

www.saskatoonfoodbank.org

202 Avenue C S, Saskatoon SK, S7M 1N2

Provides 2 to 3 days of emergency food. People can use the Food Bank once every 14 days and must provide a health card and proof of Saskatoon residency (i.e., letter or bill). The Learning Centre offers a literacy program and employment program for adults. A clinical counsellor provides counselling for individuals and families at no cost. The volunteer income tax program helps

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low-income individuals complete their income taxes. They also operate a clothing depot.

Saskatoon Interval House, Inc.

Ph: (306) 244-0185 Toll free: 1(888) 338-0880 Fax: (306) 244-0327

infoSIH@saskatoonintervalhouse.org

www.saskatoonintervalhouse.org

Interval House provides 24-hour emergency/crisis shelter for women and their children fleeing domestic violence. They also provide counseling, advocacy, and referrals.

Saskatoon Pregnancy Options Centre

Ph: (306) 665-7550 Text: (306)261-2760

contact@saskatoonpregnancyoptions.com

www.saskatoonpregnancy.com

107 - 2543 Dudley St, Saskatoon SK, S7M 5V3

They are committed to providing love, support and acceptance to women and families experiencing a pregnancy-related crisis. Striving to meet their physical, spiritual, and emotional needs, they will offer real, life-affirming choices to help women continue their pregnancies to term. They offer free pregnancy tests, information, and classes, counseling, and post-abortion grief support.

Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre (SSAIC)

Ph: (306) 244-2294 Fax: 306-244-6099

CRISIS LINE (306) 244-2224

info@ssaic.ca

www.ssaic.ca

201-506 25th St E Saskatoon, SK S7K 4A7

Offers a 24-hour crisis line service related to past or present sexual abuse.

Survivors can receive support over the phone or in person. They provide emotional support, information, referrals, and will accompany

victims/survivors to hospital, police station, court etc. The Centre will provide workshops and public education sessions as requested, and holds support groups. This is a confidential service.

Saskatoon Tribal Council – Urban Services

Providers of Aboriginal Life Supports (PALS)

Ph: (306) 659-2500 Fax: (306) 659-2155

www.sktc.sk.ca

200 - 335 Packham Avenue, Saskatoon SK, S7N 4S1

Providers of Aboriginal Life Supports (PALS), includes a range of family-centered strategies, including in-home visitation, advocating for improved conditions for families, stabilizing those in crisis, reunifying those who are

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separated, building new families, and connecting families to the resources that will sustain them in the future. Our goal is to support at risk families to avoid apprehension of their children.