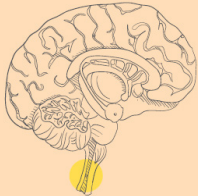


CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED A MEDICAL ACCIDENT, INJURY OR ILLNESS

CAREGIVER INFORMATION

What is medical trauma?

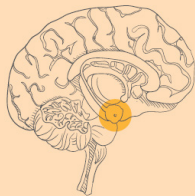
A traumatic event is an incident that causes someone a significant amount of stress. When a child experiences a medical accident, injury, or illness, this can be called a medical trauma. This does not mean that the child is traumatised. It simply means that it is important to help them to heal from the stress that their accident, injury or illness may have caused.



SURVIVAL BRAIN

Controls basic functions for survival, such as breathing and your heartbeat.

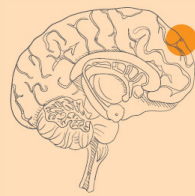
Receives messages from the body, the feeling brain, or the thinking brain to change breathing or heart-rate in order to survive.



FEELING BRAIN

Uses emotions and the 5 senses to take in information and quickly figure out what we need.

Helps us respond to loud sounds ("What's going on? Do I need to seek safety?") and to our emotions ("I feel upset; did someone hurt my feelings?").



THINKING BRAIN

Helpful for problem-solving, memory formation, and learning.

Goes offline if we need to act quickly for survival or if we are too frightened or stressed to make sense of what's happening.

1 Medical trauma and the brain

Our survival brain's alert system can be activated by trauma reminders or "triggers" (senses, feelings and thoughts related to the traumatic experience) that are unique to each person. When we are triggered, our thinking brain can shut down, as thinking can be too slow for our sense of survival, so we resort to our survival brain. Some will have trouble talking about their thoughts and feelings. Children may communicate through actions and behaviours. For children who have experienced medical trauma, behaviour can be impulsive and emotion driven (e.g. the "fight, flight and freeze" responses).

	RESPONSE	COMMON THOUGHTS	COMMON FEELINGS
FIGHT		"It's all your fault"	Anger, rage
FLIGHT		"I've got to get out of here"	Nervous, anxious, overwhelm, fear
FREEZE		"I can't do this"	Panic, overwhelm, numbed-out, helplessness, hopelessness

2 Some ways to recognise your child is experiencing medical trauma:

- Avoiding social settings like school, not wanting to see friends, or refusing to talk about their injury
- Not listening or taking in information, isolating in their bedroom, or daydreaming
- Avoiding experiences related to their burn (e.g. hot water for a scald injury)
- Impulsive and emotion-driven behaviour.

3 What can you do to help?

- Let your child know there is no "right" or "wrong" way to feel after their burn injury.
- Reassure your child that they are safe.
- Allow your child to ask questions. If you don't know the answers, be honest and try to find the answers together.
- Let your child know that you are always available to listen to their concerns.
- Encourage your child to talk or express their thoughts and feelings in creative ways.
- Model coping strategies (i.e. problem solving and emotional check-ins) for your child. Taking care of yourself will help your child learn how to take care of themselves.
- Practice healthy coping mechanisms with your child.

URGENT SUPPORT

Emergency: 000
Lifeline: 13 11 14
Suicide Call Back Service: 1 300 659 467
Mental Health Emergency Response Lines:
Metro: 1300 555 788
Peel: 1800 676 822
Country: 1800 552 002

SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

Access your GP: Request a Mental Health Care Plan
Ngala Parenting Line: (08) 9368 9368 or 1800 111 546 (for regional callers)
Mensline Australia: 1300 789 978 (for male caregivers)
Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
Speak to your support network: ask for help from family and friends

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
Headspace: 1800 650 89
Online support
ehespace
Kids Helpline webchat
Lifeline