



IRC Healing Classrooms Initiative
Student Well-being

Some Age-Specific Activities for Children after Stressful Events

Some Age-Specific Activities for Children after Stressful Events ¹		
Young children 0–7 years	Older children 8–13 years	Teens & adolescents 14–18
Draw a picture Tell a story	Draw a picture Tell a story	Art, music, dance, stories, essays, poetry, video production
Coloring books on disaster and loss	Books on friendship, families, animals (upbeat and joyful stories)	Books on friendship, adventure, poetry
Playing with dolls, toy play	Create a play or puppet show about a disaster. If it has a sad ending, never let the child leave without further discussions. This might include creating “alternative endings.” Always end on a positive note.	Create a play or puppet show. If it has a sad ending, never let the child leave without further discussions. This might include creating “alternative endings.” Always end on a positive note.
Group games	Create a game about disaster-recovery, disaster- preparedness, and partnerships	Group discussions about disaster-preparedness, or disaster-recovery and partnerships
Talks about disaster safety and self-protection	School study or community service projects	School projects on health or natural and social sciences; community service projects
Coloring books on happy family times	Ask the children to create a play or puppet show about positive outcomes after a disaster – or simply “happy times” with friends and family	Group discussions about what they would like to do/be when they are older

¹ Reprinted and adapted from Lystad, M. (Ed.). (1990). *Innovations in Mental Health Services to Disaster Victims* (DHHS Publication No. ADM 90-1390). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.