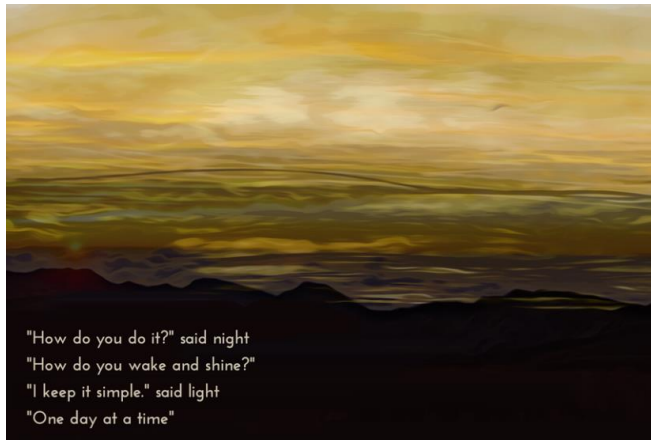


**Support for colleagues and parents/carers in promoting resilience in the aftermath of the widespread impact of the earthquakes in Southern Turkey and Northern Syria
Hackney Community CAMHS (HUH/ELFT) and Educational Psychology Service**



"How do you do it?" said night
"How do you wake and shine?"
"I keep it simple." Said light
"One day at a time"

Lemn Sissay

As the world becomes aware of the devastating impact of the horrific earthquake in Turkey and Syria, the distress is palpable. We are particularly thinking about families with Turkish, Kurdish and Syrian relatives who may have been lost, or trapped, or whose whereabouts still unknown. This guidance is intended to support local families, pupils, students and colleagues in our local communities in Hackney, who will be connected and impacted by this horrific natural disaster, with recommendations for additional sources of support included. Our thoughts and sincere condolences are with our colleagues, teachers, families and local communities.

The impact of traumatic events on children and families

What we know is that children will process significant traumas and the knowledge of devastating events with time, especially with the support of family, friends, schools and the wider community. Different families may have different experiences during and after receiving news of devastating and traumatic events. How long it takes to recover will depend on what happened to your family during and after the earthquake and

the extent of damage and loss. Many families will have lost loved ones. Some may have family or friends who are still missing or have been seriously injured and will require medical treatment and long-term rehabilitation. Some families will be known to be struggling with damage to their home and possessions, with access to medical care, and increased financial strain. Children and young people may also react differently to the news of these earthquakes and their aftermath depending on their age and prior experiences.

Expect that children may respond in different ways and be supportive and understanding of different reactions, even when you are having your own reactions and difficulties. Children's reactions to the earthquake and its aftermath are strongly influenced by how their parents, relatives, teachers, and other care-givers cope. They often turn to these adults for information, comfort, and help. There are many reactions that are common among children. These generally diminish with time but knowing about them can help you be prepared.

This summary combines ideas and offerings from First Steps, Community Camhs, Specialist Camhs ELFT and the Educational Psychology Service, Hackney. We hope to get advice for parents and carers translated to Arabic and Turkish. Please do circulate as appropriate and also see the links and websites embedded in this document for further support and guidance alongside conversations with the clinicians supporting your children's centre, school, nursery or community setting.

General advice for parents/carers and adults supporting children in schools, children's centres and youth settings (summarised from a series of resources including the National Child Trauma Support Network/NCTSN)

Common reactions to knowing about trauma, shock and devastating events which are out of our control:

Feelings of anxiety, fear, and worry about the safety of self and others:

- Children may have increased fears and worries about separation from their families here in the UK
- Young children may cling to their parents, siblings, or teachers more
- Anxiety about the safety of their homes here, school, religious, and other buildings
- Changes in behaviour
- Increased/decreased activity levels
- Decreased concentration and attention
- Increased irritability, withdrawal or emotional outbursts
- Physical complaints (headaches, stomach aches, general aches and pains)
- Changes in school-related work habits, social behaviour, and behaviour in the family
- Staying focused on the earthquake (talking repeatedly about it – young children may “play” the event)
- Increased sensitivity to sounds (sirens, loud noises, things falling or crashing – connecting them to the news)

- Changes in sleep and appetite
- For those where family members are directly affected, there may be lack of interest in usual activities, including how they spend time with friends

Things I Can Do for myself as an adult parent/carer/teacher

- Take care of yourself
- Do your best to drink plenty of water, eat regularly, and get enough sleep
- Support each other: Take time with other adult relatives, friends, or members of the community to talk or help each other, including being involved in religious or spiritual activities
- Put off major decisions. Avoid making any unnecessary life-altering decisions during this time
- Give yourself a break. Try not to overdo work/household activities. Take time to rest and do things that you like to do

Some lovely tips for parents/carers about surviving at very overwhelming times.

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Survival-Care.pdf>

Things I Can Do for My Child

- Spend time talking with your children when you feel up to it, and if it is not in this moment – let them know that you have some talking time to go through worries/questions they may have. Let children know that it is OK to ask questions and express their concerns. Their fears and concerns may need to be discussed more than one time and you should remain open to answering new questions and providing helpful information if you can, but do ask other adults to support you when you need. Find time to have these conversations that fits for you and your child.
- Find time such as if you eat together or sit together in the evening, to talk about what is happening in the family as well as in the community. Answer questions briefly and honestly, but also ask your children for their opinions and ideas.
- For younger children, follow conversations about the earthquake with a favourite story or an activity to help them feel more safe and calm.
- Maintain routines. Children feel more safe and secure with structure and routine. As much as possible, stick to everyday routines (including mealtimes, bedtime).
- Maintain expectations or “rules”. Stick with family rules, such as rules about good behaviour and respect for others.
- Limit news exposure. Protect your child from too much news coverage about the earthquake recovery, including those in newspapers, on the Internet, or on the radio or television.
- Communicate about community recovery. Reassure children that things are being done in the affected communities as far as possible to remove debris, to restore supplies, and to help families find permanent housing.
- Encourage children to help. Children recover and cope better when they feel they are helping. Find ways your children can help, including with clean-up or family activities/gathering supplies for relief efforts etc.

- Give support at bedtime. Children may become anxious when they separate from their parents, especially at bedtime. Try to spend more time with your children at bedtime with such activities as telling a story.
- Monitor adult conversations. Be aware of what is being said during adult conversations about the earthquake and its aftermath. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened unnecessarily about something they do not understand.
- Get your child's teacher involved. If there has been a serious injury or death or people are missing in your families and communities, please do let your child's teacher or other supporting and caring adults know so the school can be of help.
- Keep things hopeful. Even in the most difficult situations, identify some positive aspect and try to stay hopeful for the future. A positive and optimistic outlook helps children see the good things in the world around them.

Further information can be found at the website of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, www.NCTSN.org.

Please also see this helpful leaflet written by Dr David Trickey (Consultant Clinical Psychologist Specialising in work with children affected by trauma) for some useful insights and general principles.

[AFTER THE EVENT - Creating the best environment for recovery](#)

This leaflet from Beacon House also outlines some very practical tips for adults supporting children to ask questions, share worries and be clear about what is known or not about distressing and challenging situations.

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Talking-to-children-about-war-and-conflict.pdf>
Finally, some lovely question starters for opening up conversations with children at painful times.

<https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Simple-safe-questions.pdf>

We also attach some very helpful links for parents/carers, who themselves may well be in 'survival mode' not knowing news or the impact of such sudden devastating grief or loss. Teachers and front-line staff may well also appreciate access to support and ideas for themselves and their own families, as well as ideas for children in their care.

Please also look at the following websites for additional support/advice around being alongside children and young people in the aftermath of traumatic events.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

<http://www.innerworldwork.co.uk>

Commented [YW1]: Is this missing something?

Commented [MV(HNFT2R1): Just added thank you

www.safehandstinkingminds.co.uk Resources and support from Karen Treisman: Consultant Clinical Psychologist specialising in trauma and trauma-informed work.

Advice for colleagues – SLT, teachers and teaching support staff

When children experience stress and adversity in their homes and communities, schools become a critically important setting in which to intervene and foster resilience' (Herrenkohl et al., 2019)

Key factors that promote resilience at an individual and group level

Hobfoll, S. et al (2007) recommends the following ingredients to promote resilience following community trauma.

1. Promote sense of safety

For example

- Through normal school routines
- Reliable and regular information sharing

2. Promote calming

For example

- Scheduling structured relaxation into the school day

3. Promote sense of self– and collective efficacy

For example

- Activities that promote a sense of control and coping
- Collective Activities, e.g. sports days
- Use of circle time to solve interpersonal issues within the student body

4. Promote connectedness

For example

- Make time to support the sharing of the experience of the incident through class-based story sharing, assemblies etc.

5. Promote hope

For example

- Use culturally acceptable ways of talking about building a better future (e.g. faith based, secular)

Taken together, these principles can help to establish a communal story that reinforces resilience. Appropriate play and socialising will support all these areas, and is

particularly important. Further ideas for how this might be achieved are detailed in the appendix 1.

For consultation to help implement these principles please contact your EPS, First Steps colleagues, WAMHS or MHST practitioners.

Thinking about staff and other key adults in the support network (trauma informed leadership)

It is important for leaders to consider the impact on themselves and staff, parents and other professionals who might be connected or affected by the unfolding traumatic events in Turkey and Syria. Staff and parents may direct links to family there, and have their own distress and uncertainty/grief to manage, which may affect children's sense of safety, and possibly their attendance, mood, and behaviour. All may be managing similar psychological processes, and will cope in a variety of ways. Attention to the psychological support of staff and parents will facilitate the setting's ability to contain the emotional and behavioural disruption in the student body (Muller & Goldenberg).

Trauma (Cook-Cottone, 2004)

- Trauma is the experience of situations that are perceived as life threatening or risk serious physical or psychological harm.
- Simple Trauma is the experience of a single discrete threat.
- Complex Trauma is the experience of chronically repeating threats.

Community Trauma (Hobfoll et al, 2007)

Community trauma is the shared experience of a traumatic event across a community. In the literature these have often involved natural disasters (hurricanes, tsunamis, floods etc) and human disasters (wars, school shootings, major nuclear accidents).

We have gathered together some additional resources for schools and links for your attention, with particular attention to supporting staff and families to hold children and young people in mind at this very difficult and traumatic time for many of our colleagues, families and the local community. Appendix 2 has some of the behaviours that show that children are worried. We would advise that you actively monitor children and if these behaviours persist for a long period of time, more than 6 months, you should seek further guidance from CAMHS.

Commented [YW3]: I have re-written this and renamed Appendix 2. What do you think about it and the timing particularly?

Commented [MV(HNFT4R3): Looks good to me as a summary and time period. First few months, understandable response to immediate situation – thank you

Appendix 1

Examples of whole school approaches following community trauma

	Hobfoll et al. guidance	Specific examples and ideas from the literature
Promote sense of safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish relative safety and confidence in protections available Limit amount of time talking about the trauma if this makes people more anxious Leadership provides reassuring, balanced voice to increase perception of safety Provide balanced information Manage media exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assemblies to share information Newsletters/website providing information PSHE about managing media exposure and managing anxiety
Promote calming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for grounding and relaxation such as breathing retraining, mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation Provide psychoeducation about the stress response, sleep hygiene, behavioural activation, emotion regulation and problem-solving skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities at start of the day and after transition times to aid relaxation Preserve an appropriate room in school where students can drop in (without an appointment) for support through access to a quiet space or therapy focused / supportive conversation

<p>Promote sense of self- and collective efficacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase sense of ability to cope and of being in control through increasing skills in emotion regulation and problem solving using cognitive-behavioural approaches • Remind of self-efficacy and build on it using a strengths-based approach. • Community activities to enable children to see appropriate coping and to be involved in planning and implementing activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation workshops for parents, children and staff • Safe spaces to share in e.g. Circle time • PSHE (e.g. SEAL on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making) • Community events such as plays, music concerts, fetes, sports days • Signpost to local services • Provide written resources / handouts / information booklets / newsletters / website
<p>Promote connectedness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower natural support network • Help people to tap into existing supports. Increase opportunities for social support activities, bringing together community groups for problem solving, sharing emotional understanding, acceptance and sharing of experiences discussion about coping • Psychoeducation about social supports and increase identification and recruitment of social supports • Identify and help those who are more socially isolated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation workshops • Coffee mornings • Assemblies • Classroom displays about the value of social support • Encourage telling of stories through artwork and sharing events • Increasing opportunities for young people and staff to build relationships with specialist staff who can help raise awareness of mental health, provide consultation, identification of students & trainings

Promote hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of western notions of hope, based on predictability, and explore where hope is garnered from e.g. religious and spiritual beliefs, or other resources • Join with and support through any barriers to gaining resources – not doing for • Identify and amplify strengths. Ensure those in need of treatment receive it • De-catastrophise • Help telling of stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of faith leaders, mental health professionals • Provide range of different supports. • Assemblies • Encourage telling of stories through artwork and sharing events
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Appendix 2

Signs that children are worried

Changes in behaviour or emotion in Pre-schoolers	Changes in behaviour or emotion in School-age children	Changes in behaviour or emotion in Adolescents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting out • Nightmares • Sleep disturbance • Regression • Clinging • Compulsive repetitive play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed wetting • Clinging • Anxiety • Difficulties attending school • Less emotional regulation • Withdrawal • Arguing /fighting • Complaints of physical symptoms • Sleep disturbance • Event specific fears • Traumatic play or themes present in writing, drawing and pretending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in sense of identity, future, safety and connection e.g. diminished sense of future • Self-harm • Suicidality • Substance misuse • Changes in their emotional regulation • Difficulties attending school • Withdrawal • Unusual sensory experiences or beliefs • Loss of contact with reality

Additional resources to support schools and community colleagues.

<https://uktraumacouncil.org/resources/critical-incidents?cn-reloaded=1>

Please also note available resources produced by the network "MHPSS.net" that supports interventions in the humanitarian context around MHPSS [Mental Health and Psychosocial Services] and EiE. They usually get funding from WHO and other UN bodies to produce useful resources and guidance in the field and particularly in emergency contexts. Below is one of the toolkit they produced and this is available in Arabic and Turkish.

[MHPSS and EiE Toolkit - The MHPSS Network](#)

Solidarity postcard/kite activity based on the response to the earthquakes in Japan in 2011
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/unesco-launches-kizuna-campaign-for-japans-schools-the-japanese-word-kizuna-means-solidarity-or-tie-unesco-has-adopted-the-word-for-a-new-campaign-school-children-from-around-the-world-are-being-asked-to-write-a-message-of-hope->



on-a-postcard-the-aim-is-for-each-of-the-thousands-of-school-children-who-were-affected-by-the-earthquake-and-subsequent-tsunami-that-hit-northeast-japan-on-march-11-to-receive-a-postcard-as-an-act-of-solidarity-/articleshow/8161294.cms