

**When you are NOT directly involved  
in the Traumatic Event (critical incident):  
How to Help Family Members and Friends**

☞ Encourage (but do NOT pressure) your loved one to talk about what happened and his/her reaction to it. Talk is the best medicine. Your primary “job” is to listen and reassure. Listen carefully. If they cry or tremble, **assure them that they are now safe**, and that their reactions are normal.

☞ You may not understand what your loved one is going through at this time, but offer your love and support. Don't be afraid to ask what you can do that he/she would consider helpful.

☞ Provide help with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, caring for the family, and taking care of children.

☞ Give private time.

☞ Don't take their anger or other feelings personally.

☞ If an event is upsetting to you and your loved one, children may also be affected. They may need to talk, too.

☞ **Don't tell the survivor that they are “lucky it wasn't worse.” Traumatized people are not consoled by such statements. Instead, tell them you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them.**

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