RESILIENCE AND HOPE

There is hope for children with traumatic stress. Children are amazingly resourceful and resilient. Each child is unique and not every child who experiences a traumatic event will develop child traumatic stress. If you have concerns about a child, seek help. There are treatments that work.

CONTACT THE AMBIT NETWORK
Tel: 612-624-7722
Web: www.ambitnetwork.org

With support from:
Children’s Mental Health Division
Minnesota Department of Human Services
www.dhs.state.mn.us/cmh

University of Minnesota

Understanding Child Traumatic Stress

AMBIT NETWORK
Navigating research and practice in child trauma
WHAT IS TRAUMATIC STRESS?
Child traumatic stress is the physical and emotional responses of a child to events or experiences that threaten their sense of safety and security. Traumatic stress can affect all areas of a child’s life in the home, school and community.

CAUSES OF TRAUMATIC STRESS
Traumatic stress can occur when an event threatens a child’s life, or the life of somebody close to him/her, and causes harm to a child’s emotional or physical well-being. Traumatic events can range from one event to many events over time. A child may develop traumatic stress after experiencing or seeing any of the following:

- Car accident
- Natural disaster (flood, tornado, etc.)
- Community or school violence
- Serious injury or illness
- Sudden loss of a parent or caregiver
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Child neglect
- Domestic violence

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
Symptoms of child traumatic stress vary by the child’s developmental stage, but can include:

- Flashbacks or bad dreams
- Avoiding certain people, places or things
- Not doing things they used to enjoy
- Changes in behaviors or moods
- Difficulties at school
- Trouble eating and sleeping
- Problems with friendships

IMPACT OF TRAUMATIC STRESS
If left untreated, child traumatic stress can result in lifelong problems. It can negatively impact:

- Healthy development
- School, relationships and work
- Ability to participate fully in a healthy life

WHERE TO GET HELP
Getting help early for a child can increase a child’s chances for success. There are effective treatments for child traumatic stress. Ambit Network, along with DHS, has trained over 100 clinicians in Minnesota on evidence-based trauma treatment. For more information, including a list of agencies with trained mental health providers, visit www.ambitnetwork.org, or call us at 612-624-7722.
Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

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