



LISTEN-PROTECT-CONNECT



These three first aid steps can really help your child recover. Listen to them; protect them by having shelter; help them connect with others. It can make a big difference if you can help your child have a sense of emotional and physical safety where they feel protected as far as possible from the traumatic event. You are bound to feel upset and distressed too, but a child will respond well if they are comforted and see that you are being calm. You may feel very helpless but simple things can really help your child cope. Therapy and counselling too soon after an event can be very unhelpful. Children and young people can learn to cope with simple strategies and routines.

This is what your child needs for Psychological First Aid:

1. To be with their parents/ carers as much as possible
2. Keep a calm and safe environment where at all possible
3. Take steps where you can to get basic health needs including shelter, warmth, healthy food and rest
4. Explain what has happened and, if possible, what will happen next
5. Make sure you look after your own safety and wellbeing
6. Distract your child and yourself from the sight, sounds, smells of the fire
7. Tell your child that they are safe, you are with them and that you will look after them
8. Limit media exposure. Protect your child from graphic depictions of trauma
9. Spend extra time with your children, playing games, reading together, or just cuddling
10. Take care of your children's health. Help them get enough rest, exercise, water, and healthy food.
11. Return to regular daily life as soon as possible. Children will feel more secure with structure and routine. If you can, keep to regular mealtimes and bedtimes.
12. Stick to your family rules about good behaviour. Give them normal daily tasks. Children cope better and recover sooner if they feel they are being helpful and things are as normal as possible
13. Give lots of support and more time at bedtime. Children may be more anxious at bedtime. Spend a little more time than usual talking, cuddling, or reading
14. Help with boredom. The fire may have disrupted the family's daily activities. Help children think of things they can do and get others to help you support them with child-friendly activities.
15. Try to keep children away from people who are very upset or other people's conversations about the fire
16. Just listen in a non judging way and accept how the child reacts and feels. Try not to say things like 'stop being silly' or 'be brave'
17. Answer any questions clearly but without lots of detail. If you do not have information, say so.
18. Reassure them that their reactions are normal and will pass in time

Ask for further help if...

If your child still has real difficulties more than six weeks after the fire then you should seek professional help from your local **NHS GP** or a mental health professional particularly if:

- 1) The child's upset feelings and behaviour seem to be getting worse
- 2) The signs of extreme stress last for longer than about one month to six weeks
- 3) Worries prevent you and your child from getting on with normal, everyday life after 4-6 weeks