



Common Reactions to Trauma – Children (From Johnson, 1993, School Crisis Management)

Behavioral (and Interpersonal)

Pre-school

Bedwetting
Thumb sucking
Repetitive play; reenacting trauma
Anxious attachment, clinging
Aggression/disobedience

Elementary School

Clinging
Resumption of outgrown habits
Competition with siblings
Repetitive talking; reenacting trauma
Disobedience
Drop in school performance

Junior/Senior High

Can't meet responsibilities
Resumes earlier coping styles
Withdraws socially; interpersonal problems
Self-deprecation
Exhibits antisocial behavior
Abuses alcohol/drugs
Decline in school performance
Sudden changes in attitudes, styles, relationships, personality
Acts "too old, too soon" (dropping out, pregnancy, marriage)
Apathy

Somatic (Physical)

Pre-School

Loss of appetite
Pale appearance
Overeating
Bowel/bladder problems
Sleep disturbances
Nightmares

Elementary School

Complaints about vision
Complaints about stomach problems
Headaches
Pale appearance
Itching
Sleep disturbances

Junior/Senior High

Headaches
Vague complaints, pain
Skin rashes
Loss of appetite/overeating

Cognitive (Thoughts)

Pre-School

Shorter attention span
Confusion regarding: event, locations, sequencing, death

Elementary School

Confusion regarding: event, sequencing
Inability to concentrate

Junior/Senior High

Problems concentrating
Over-concern re: health
Intellectualization
Rationalization

Affective (Emotional)

Pre-school

Generalized fears
Nervousness, anxieties, and worries
Separation anxiety
Fearful of reminders
Panicked/hysterical
Irritability
Blunted or numb

Elementary School

Fear of recurrence, related stimuli
Wanting to be fed, dressed
School phobia
Avoidance of large groups
Aggression
Over-concern for family safety
Anger, hostility, belligerence
Apathy, withdrawal
Guilt
Sadness/Depression
Blunted or numb

Junior/Senior High

Anger, hostility, belligerence
Guilt
Chronic sadness/depression
Anxiety