

## WHAT IS CHILDHOOD TRAUMA?

Children's early experiences matter whether they are positive or negative and affect children through adulthood.

Childhood trauma is when a child experiences harm or threatened harm to their health or safety, including physical, sexual, and verbal abuse or exposure to violence or emotionally upsetting situations.

**When harmful experiences happen to a child – the adults in their lives need to act!**

## HOW CHILDREN MAY REACT

- Bedwetting/bowel or bladder problems – diarrhea, constipation, loss of control
- Thumb-sucking
- Unexplained fears – monsters, strangers, animals, darkness, etc.
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Indigestion
- Vomiting
- Sleep disturbances/nightmares
- Increased competition with siblings for attention
- Excessive clinging
- Headaches
- Aggressive behavior
- Irritability
- Unable to concentrate/problems with schoolwork

## TRAUMA & THE DEVELOPING BRAIN

**Trauma will change a child's brain and body.** Interferes with ability to concentrate in school. Changes how child views the world.

Leads to health problems later in life such as alcoholism, depression, eating disorders, heart disease, cancer, and other chronic diseases.



**Trauma has more severe effects when...**

It happens again and again.

Different stresses add up.

It happens to a younger child.

The child has few social supports (healthy personal relationships).

The child has few coping skills (language skills, mature thinking skills, good health, self-esteem).

## HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD WHO HAS EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

Get professional help. Asking for ideas or help does not make you a bad parent!

Read the child's behavior as a message, not as directed at you.

Tell the child that he/she is safe.

Maintain regular home and school routines. Note what triggers bad reactions from the child.

**Remember:**

Kids need to know what to do with their feelings.

Ask a professional how to improve the child's behaviors.

Be patient – there is no set timetable for healing.

### WEBSITES:

Resources on Trauma for Caregivers & Families  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/trauma/caregivers/>

Parenting in a Challenging World – The National Child Traumatic Stress Network  
[www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers](http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers)

The Adverse Childhood Experience Study – ACE  
<http://acestudy.org/>

# Types of Help in Ashland County:

## **Healing Resources:**

\*Ask for a certified trauma therapist.

*Appleseed Community Mental Health Center*  
2233 Rocky Lane  
Ashland, OH 44805  
<http://www.appleseedmentalhealth.com/>  
(419) 281-3716

*Catholic Charities Community Services Ashland County*  
34 West 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Suite 18  
Ashland, OH 44805  
<http://ccdogle.org/county-served/ashland>  
(419) 289-1903

## **Private Providers:**

*Ground Work Play Therapy, Inc.*  
1763 State Route 60  
Ashland, OH 44805  
<http://www.groundworkplaytherapy.org/>  
Phone: (419) 289-4825

*Encompass*  
1590 Crestview Drive  
Ashland, OH 44805  
[www.encompasscounseling.org](http://www.encompasscounseling.org)  
(419) 289-0970

For others, check local listings.

## **Family Educators:**

*Ashland Parenting Plus*  
1768 St. Rt. 60  
Ashland, OH 44805  
<http://parentingplus.org/>  
(419) 281-3788

*Catholic Charities Community Services Ashland County*  
34 West 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Suite 18  
Ashland, OH 44805  
<http://ccdogle.org/county-served/ashland>  
(419) 289-1903

## **Service Links & Resource Ideas:**

*Ashland Co. Family & Children First Council*  
110 Cottage Street  
Ashland, OH 44805  
(419) 289-0000 ext 5015

*School & Community Liaison Services*  
(Check child's school or Appleseed)

## **Tips to Finding the Right Service Fit:**

- Learn about different kinds of treatment options.
- Interview more than one specialist.
- Look for an experienced certified trauma specialist.
- Check licensing.
- Therapist should allow and encourage your participation in treatment.
- Make sure you feel safe, respected and understood by the specialist.
- Trust your instincts.

## **Books can be a very helpful and healing tool. Some suggestions:**

- Holmes, M. (2000). *A Terrible Thing Happened*. Magination Press.
- Farber Strause, S. (2013). *Healing Days: A Guide for Kids Who Have Experienced Trauma*. Magination Press.

See the National Association of School Psychologists list for many more options:  
[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/Books\\_for\\_Children\\_Dealing\\_with\\_Loss\\_or\\_Trauma.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/Books_for_Children_Dealing_with_Loss_or_Trauma.pdf)

## **Check the Ashland or Loudonville libraries for titles and book loans**

# A Caregiver's Guide to Child Trauma



*Negative life experiences do not have to define who we are.*

**Mental Health & Recovery Board**  
1605 County Road 1095, Ashland, OH 44805  
**419-281-3139**

