



Supporting children and families in the aftermath of disaster



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Basic needs are basic



- UWF (Brief Therapy)
- Need to deal with basic needs before able to address emotional needs
 - Safety, security; Food, shelter; Communication and reunification with family
- Staff have their own basic needs
 - Crisis plans need to address them as a priority



Potential symptoms of adjustment reactions

- Sleep problems
- Separation anxiety and school avoidance
- Trauma-related fears and anxiety
- Difficulties with concentration
- Deterioration in academic performance
- Regression
- Sadness and depression
- Substance abuse
- Somatization
- Post-traumatic symptoms and PTSD

Range of reactions to crisis



- Wide range of reactions and concerns
 - Not just PTSD
- Bereavement
- Secondary losses and stressors
 - Relocation
 - Loss of peer network
 - Academic failure
 - New social network
 - Financial stresses
 - Parental stress, mental health problems
 - Marital conflict or domestic violence
- One crisis often awakens feelings related to pre-existing or past crisis



Parents often underestimate symptoms



- Children may withhold complaints because of concerns they are abnormal, or to protect parents who are upset
- Parents may not think professionals are interested or assume “normal reactions to abnormal event”
- Stigma related to mental illness



Adjustment Over Time in Crisis



A = baseline functioning

B = event

C = vulnerable state

D = usual coping mechanisms fail

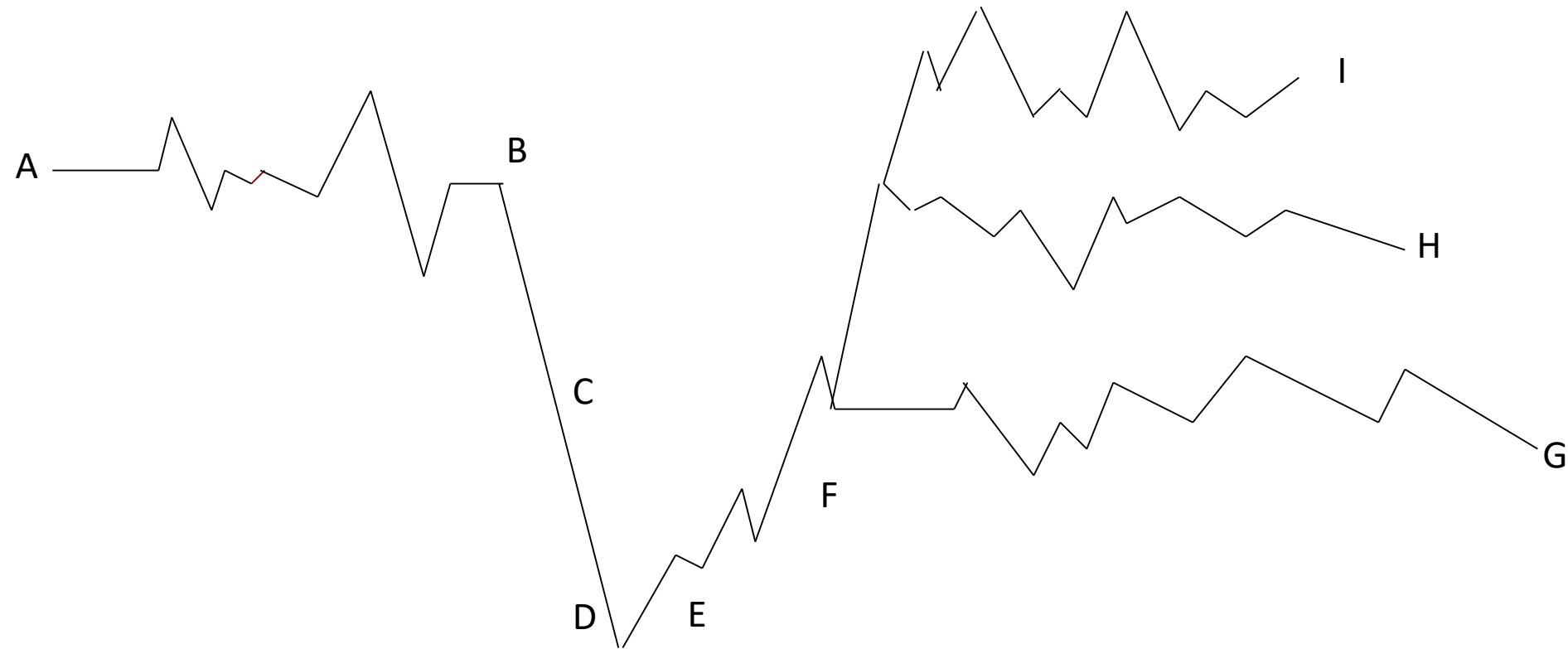
E = helplessness,
hopelessness

F = improved functioning

G = continued impairment

H = return to baseline

I = post-traumatic growth



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Website resources



National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement

www.schoolcrisiscenter.org

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck
School of Social Work
National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement

Coalition to Support Grieving Students

www.grievingstudents.org



COALITION *to* SUPPORT
GRIEVING STUDENTS

AAP Children and Disasters – www.aap.org/disasters

– Coping and adjustment:

www.aap.org/disasters/adjustment

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For further information about NCSCB
visit us, call us, like us, share us:

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck

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See our guide for talking to children about terror attacks and tragedies

READ MORE

THE NCSCB

Dedicated to helping schools support their students through crisis and loss

I Need Help Now

Materials and guidance for schools experiencing crises or helping grieving students

GET HELP NOW

Help Me Prepare

Resources and guidelines to prepare to support children in times of crisis and loss

GET PREPARED




Video and Downloadable Grief Support
Modules for School Personnel

Conversation & Support

- Talking With Children >
- What Not to Say >
- Providing Support Over Time >
- Peer Support >

VIEW MODULES



Conversation & Support

Developmental & Cultural Considerations

Practical Considerations

Reactions & Triggers

Professional Preparation & Self-Care

Crisis & Special Circumstances

www.grievingstudents.org

Order Free Materials



After a loved one dies—
How children grieve and how parents
and other adults can support them.

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