



## Children and Trauma: Teacher's Role Written Video Transcript

Shortly after the [0:03] earthquake what we decided in Alameda County was that perhaps the best intervention in the schools was to train teachers. First of all we know that teachers are not mental health professionals, but they certainly can benefit by a training by a mental health professional. [00:00.20.00]

It's important also when we start to talk about dealing with children in a disaster that we talk about ourselves first. And particularly, as happened for the October 17th earthquake, when you had a few days before you went back to being with the children, that there is a time for you as the adult to really [00:00.40.00] deal with your own feelings about helplessness and fear and anger so that when you come back to be with the children you can do so in a way that is supportive to them.

As mental health professionals we know that the defusing of children after a disaster is of a major importance. I mean to allow [00:01.00.00] children to express themselves with regards to the trauma of the disaster just experienced. During the training we train teachers to understand the importance of the defusing, first of all, and giving them the tools to do so.

Can someone read this word?

Disaster.

Disaster. [00:01.20.00] What's a disaster? What's a disaster?

[1:25] destroyed.

When things are destroyed or things are messed up, yeah.

In using the method of talking with students in a group you're limited just because of the size of the group. You're going to get some who are going to take over the conversation. [00:01.40.00] You're going to have some who are going to listen. Even though one child might be very quiet and shy there are other children who take advantage of the connection available to them and they will talk about it. And maybe this will be as a role model for shyer children.

When you have these feelings and you are scared or sad, who do you talk to?  
[00:02.00.00] Who can you talk to?

(myself)



Yourself. Who else can you talk to?

[2:05]

Who? Your parents. Who else can you talk to?

My (mother).

Your mom, yeah.

I try to be as warm with the kids as possible so that if there really isn't anyone they can turn to at least they can find me after school to talk about these things [00:02.20.00] and I can kind of begin to direct them a certain way and encourage the parents too to give them the kind of direction they need.

When bad things happen to me I feel scared. I feel real sad. I get worried. I get terrified. I get nervous. I sometimes feel helpless and sometimes I feel shaken too. But one thing I oftentimes feel [00:02.40.00] is I get mad. How many of you get mad when bad things happen to you? Mad. What do you do want you're mad? What do you do when you're mad?

Get nervous.

You what?

I get nervous.

You get nervous when you're mad, yeah.

I lose my temper.

You lose your temper.

More or less I validate that [00:03.00.00] what they went through was real and that their reaction to it is okay. And if one person has a benign reaction and one has a more serious reaction that's okay too because people are at different stations.

When you feel sad and scared and worried, that's all normal. But when it stays with you too long and you're finding you can't eat, [00:03.20.00] you can't sleep, you can't play, you don't laugh as much anymore over a long period of time that's when you should talk to the people that you named, like your grandmother or your mother or your father or your friends or even to yourself.



I try to impart a sense of empowerment to the children. They don't have a lot of power [00:03.40.00] in this world to begin with. But whatever we can leave them with knowing that they have some control over their lives, they're not at the mercy of everybody or anything that happens to them, that they have the mental ability and the emotional stamina to work through what life deals out to them that is important thing to leave them with. [00:04.00.00]

And even though it was scary and you were worried, you all knew what to do. You all got under the sills. You all knew to get under a table. You all knew how to take care of yourself, and that's really good. So, whenever there's an emergency you might remember your last emergency and say, "Ooh, I took care of myself last time. I can do it again."

[end of audio]

