TIPS SHEET: Anxiety in the Aftermath of Tornadoes

Experiencing worry and anxiety after a big storm is not unusual. By listening and reassuring your child when he or she is showing signs of anxiety or worry, you will make your child feel safer. Remember, as a caregiver, your feelings are also important. Reach out for support if you need it.

**Signs of Stress**

- Feelings of anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others (including pets)
- Fears about another tornado coming
- Changes in behavior (ex. Increased activity level, decreased concentration & attention, increased irritability, withdrawal, angry outburst, aggression)
- Increased physical complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, aches and pains)
- Changes in school performance

**Coping**

- Provide words of encouragement; let them know it is okay to feel
- Squeeze something (your fist, play doh, clay, silly putty, or a stress ball)
- Name animals alphabetically (alligator, bear, dog, cow, etc.)
- Write down or draw your feelings
- Squeeze/hug a pillow
- Listen to music while it is raining or stormsing
- Have your child count backwards starting at 67 (if younger start at 21)

**Resources**

- Call 2-1-1 for general information on mental health support that is available in the community or visit http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com
- Hands on Nashville (615) 298-1108 http://www.hon.org
- Gideon’s Army (615) 852-7530 https://www.facebook.com/GideonsArmyUnited

**5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Technique**

- 5: **LOOK** around for 5 things you see and say them out loud (ex. I see a computer, a cup, a pair of shoes)
- 4: **FEEL**-pay attention to your body and think of 4 things you can feel and say them out loud (ex. I feel the hair on the back of my neck, I feel the pillow I am sitting on, I feel my warm feet in my socks)
- 3: **LISTEN** for 3 sounds (ex. The tv on, the cars going by outside, my tummy rumbling)
- 2: **SMELL**- say 2 things you smell (if you can’t smell anything; name two smells)
- 1: **TASTE**-say 1 thing you can taste (ex. Toothpaste from brushing your teeth or name your favorite thing to taste.)

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