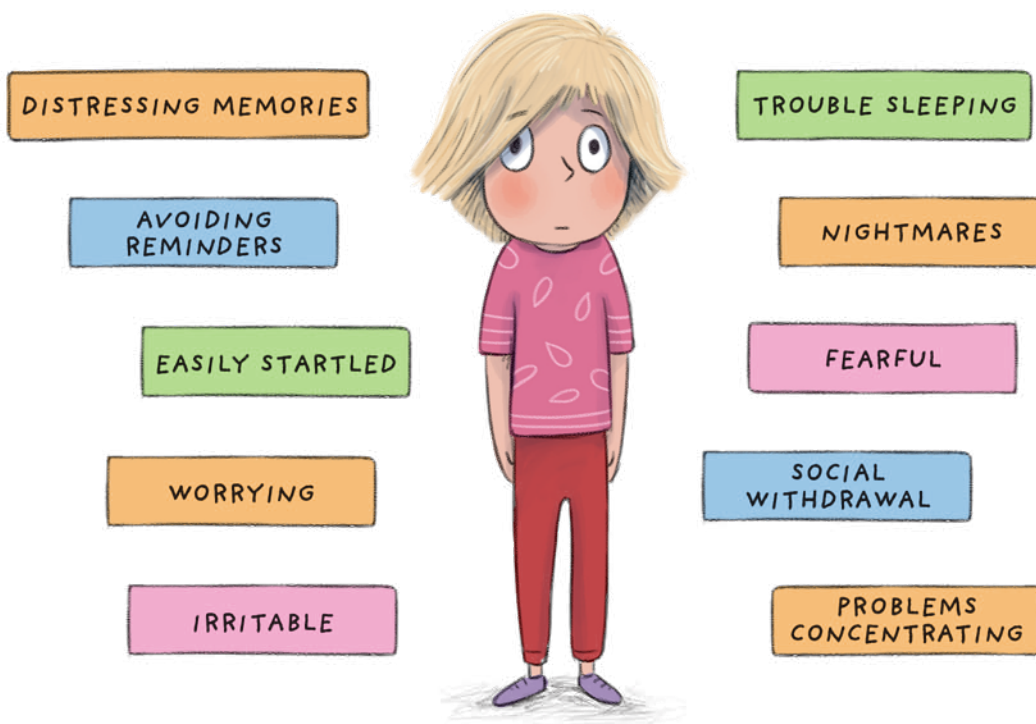




Helping your child (6-10 years) Medical traumatic stress

It is common and normal for primary-school aged children to experience medical traumatic stress. However, the way children understand their experience, communicate distress and respond over time depends on temperament, previous experiences, stage of development and support provided.

Developmental considerations: Primary-school aged children are starting to understand more about the world around them but may still feel confused about their medical experiences. They will look to adults to gauge the seriousness of the situation and may copy their reactions. If what they're told doesn't match what they see, they may use their imagination to fill in the gaps, which can increase worries, fear, confusion and distorted memories. They may be able to talk about their feelings and worries or show their emotions through drawings, play or behaviour, like acting out or becoming quite.



Six ways you can support your child



Connection: Focus on ways to connect throughout the day by providing comfort, affection, fun and special time together.



Routine: Follow predictable sleep, eating, play and education routines and have clear and consistent expectations for behaviour.



Identify emotions: Notice signs of distress and name and validate feelings. Respond calmly with warmth and affection. Consider if challenging behaviors are signs of stress.



Targeted strategies: Use relaxation techniques and coping strategies to manage big feelings, and encourage and reward brave and positive behaviours.



Processing the event: Talk, read and play games to help them understand and make meaning of their experience. Correct misunderstandings of facts.



Seek extra help: If emotional distress continues and is affecting relationships, medical care and daily activities seek extra help.

Scan this QR code for more information and resources. You can also talk to your child's treating team, GP, paediatrician or child health nurse for further advice.



Resource ID: 0018. Reviewed: January 2025.

Disclaimer: This information has been produced by healthcare professionals as a guideline only and is intended to support, not replace, discussion with your child's doctor or healthcare professionals. Information is updated regularly, so please check you are referring to the most recent version. Seek medical advice, as appropriate, for concerns regarding your child's health.



Queensland
Government