

## **FACT SHEET: EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO INJURY**

[www.aftertheinjury.org](http://www.aftertheinjury.org)

### ***Injury Facts:***

Each year in the US:

- 1 in 4 children and teens will need medical care for an injury.
- 7 million injured children are treated in an Emergency Room.
- Several hundred thousand injured children are admitted to the hospital.
- Parents are the most important source of support for their injured child, but often don't know how they can best help, or where to turn when more help is needed.
- Few parents seek out assistance for their child's (or their own) emotional stress following an injury.

### ***Emotional Reactions to Injury***

- **How many children are affected?**
  - Researchers have found that most children and parents (5 in 6) experience at least a few acute stress symptoms within the first month after injury.
- **How long do symptoms usually last?**
  - With a little time and support, most of these reactions get better within a few weeks.
  - However, six months later, about 1 in 6 injured children and their parents will still have significant traumatic stress reactions that bother them.
- **What are traumatic stress reactions?**
  - There are three main types of traumatic stress reactions that can become problematic when they last too long or begin to interfere with a child getting back to enjoying daily activities:
    1. *Re-experiencing: Reliving what happened*
    2. *Avoidance: Staying away from reminders*
    3. *Hyper-arousal: Feeling anxious or jumpy*
  - [www.AfterTheInjury.org](http://www.AfterTheInjury.org) is a resource to help parents assess their children's reactions and offers parents easy access to credible information, tips, and practical tools to help support their children's emotional recovery.
- **What makes children more likely to experience traumatic stress related to an injury?**
  - If the child previously experienced a traumatic event, or had prior behavioral or emotional difficulties
  - If, during the incident, the child was extremely frightened, was separated from parents, or experienced a more severe level pain
  - Children or parents whose early stress responses were more severe

- Children or parents who use withdrawal or avoidance as a coping mechanism
- **Where can families find help?**
  - [www.AfterTheInjury.org](http://www.AfterTheInjury.org) is a new web site from The Center for Injury Research and Prevention (CIRP) at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) that offers parents practical tools to help support their children's physical and emotional recovery. Parent can watch brief videos, download tip sheets, create a personalized care plan based on their child's individual situation.