

YOUTH 9-13 YEARS OLD

WHAT THEY MAY SAY & DO



- Resentment
- Guilt
- Crying
- Anger & aggression
- School problems & acting out
- Fear
- Isolation
- Anxiety
- Repetitive thoughts
- Physical complaints

WHAT THEY THINK & FEEL



HOW TO HELP

- Let the child determine when to express feelings and process the event
- Let the child decide how to tell others (at school, activities, friends, etc.)
- Encourage activities
- Maintain contact with others

YOUTH 13-18 YEARS OLD

WHAT THEY MAY SAY & DO



- Resentment
- Guilt
- Depression
- Anger & acting out
- Fear
- Possible self-harm
- Avoiding feelings
- Anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Physical complaint
- Possible substance use

WHAT THEY THINK & FEEL



HOW TO HELP

- Keep youth involved in family problem solving
- Be flexible but maintain consistent limits
- Be open and patient
- Be aware that youth may act out or engage in risky behavior

The Trauma of Witnessing an Opioid Overdose: How to Help Children

The signs of opioid overdose are scary!



Witnessing the overdose of a loved one can have lasting effects on children. They cope in different ways and need honest information. Look for signs of trauma and get professional help.

For more information visit:
u.osu.edu/toolkit



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS OLD

WHAT THEY MAY SAY & DO



- Repeated questions
- Crying
- Changes in eating & sleeping
- Acting younger
- Looking for missing caregiver
- Not understanding the situation

WHAT THEY THINK & FEEL



HOW TO HELP

- Keep things as normal as possible
- Respond to the child's needs
- Acknowledge child's feelings
- Draw pictures
- Extra playtime and attention

CHILDREN 3-5 YEARS OLD

WHAT THEY MAY SAY & DO



- Clinging to family members and adult friends
- Toddler behavior (thumb sucking, bed wetting)
- Crying
- Throwing tantrums
- Fighting
- Separation and other increased fears
- Pretending everything is fine

WHAT THEY THINK & FEEL



HOW TO HELP

- Consistent care
- Tell stories & show pictures of the loved one
- Correct fantasies/denials with simple explanations
- Be patient when child replays overdose event
- Be ready for moodiness and acknowledge child's feelings

CHILDREN 6-9 YEARS OLD

WHAT THEY MAY SAY & DO



- Anger and aggression
- Fighting
- Mood swings
- Withdrawal
- Stomach aches & headaches
- Self-blame
- Desire to reunify with deceased
- School problems
- Focus on death

WHAT THEY THINK & FEEL



HOW TO HELP

- Keep youth involved in family problem solving
- Be flexible but maintain consistent limits
- Be open and patient
- Be aware that youth may act out or engage in risky behavior