Often when children have experienced overwhelming events their behavior may change in quiet ways. They may become less active and less interested in the activities in which they are usually involved. You may notice that they are not as excitable or playful and maybe not even as noisy as usual, or that they may be spending more time by themselves. They may also be less able to talk and be with you. When you ask them questions about how they are feeling or what they are doing or ask them to do something, they may say very little or look as if they are ignoring you. At these times it is hard for parents to know what’s going on with their kids. Asking too many questions usually doesn’t help and often becomes frustrating for both parent and child. This kind of behavior that can come after traumatic events may be especially hard to sort out when you have a teenager. Many teenagers already spend more time alone in their rooms and often may respond to caregivers with one-word answers.

While withdrawing from the world may be an understandable way for kids to try to deal with upsetting experiences it doesn’t wind up helping them get over their distress. Helping your child start to get back to their regular activities and routines is more likely to help kids than trying to push them to talk about scary feelings and experiences.

**When your child is depressed or withdrawn Here are some ways you can help:**

**Maintain routines**
Even if they express complete disinterest, keep the same routine that existed before the traumatic event. For example, encourage participation in family meals, after school activities, and going to school. This may be difficult for your child, so sympathize with them, while encouraging their activity.

**Do not let your child spend too much time alone**
For example, watching TV, spending hours alone in their bedroom, or over-sleeping.

**Encourage outdoor activities**
For example, ask your child to join you on walks, doing errands, checking out new places and things, or organizing family or neighborhood games or activities.
ASK YOUR CHILD ABOUT SCHOOL
If your child is unable to report much about his/her own experiences in classes, social events or school news, ask him/her about his/her friends, their activities and their views of things.

WHEN YOU SEE YOUR CHILD WITHDRAWING
Point this out and remind them of what was discussed with the clinician – for example, the connection between the event and the attempt to avoid upsetting feelings by retreating from the world.

ASK YOUR CHILD IF THEY ARE HAVING SPECIFIC THOUGHTS OR IMAGES
Again, refer to the meeting with the CFTSI clinician and ask “Do the images or thoughts about the incident make you want to get away and be on your own? “

ASK YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS
Are they sad, fearful, angry, confused? Does this make them want to get away and be by themselves?

REMEMBER:

BE AWARE OF HOW YOU ARE FEELING
If you are upset, angry or distressed, make sure that you can respond to your child in a calm supportive manner before interacting with him or her. If you are having a hard time yourself, it’s better to wait until you’re feeling better before trying to help you child re-connect with the world.

REMIND CHILD OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THEIR BEHAVIOR AND FEELINGS
Which are brought up by the event, as discussed in meetings with clinician.

MAINTAIN ROUTINES
Keep routines that existed before the traumatic events as a way of supporting order and predictability in your child’s world.