When upsetting things happen to kids

What may happen:

Many children have scary or upsetting experiences, such as being in a bad accident, being abused or seeing terrible things happen to someone they know. When kids see or experience upsetting things, they may have all kinds of feelings, such as:

- Scared
- Nervous
- Sad
- Angry
- Confused

Some kids have a hard time sleeping or they get stomach aches or headaches. Some kids can’t concentrate at school or little things make them mad and they get in lots of trouble.

Sometimes kids can’t stop thinking about what happened. Lots of time they try not to think about it and stay away from things that remind them. They hope that if they act like nothing happened, their bad feelings will go away. But that usually doesn’t work.

What helps:

When children have bad things happen to them, talking with their parents can help them figure out their feelings. The Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention helps kids and adults talk more easily about how kids are feeling and acting after physical or sexual abuse or other bad experiences. It helps families learn ways of dealing with the upset feelings so kids can start to feel better and stronger again.

There are some general things that are likely to help most kids feel better:

- Keep doing your normal activities, even if you don’t feel like it.
- Spend time with your family and good friends.
- Get outside and do some physical activity.
- Tell an adult you trust or a good friend how you are feeling. Don’t keep it all to yourself.

During sessions with the clinician, you talked about specific things for you and your family to do. The information on the other side should help remind you of what you practiced.