WHAT IS A TRAUMATIC EVENT?

Traumatic events are situations that may be sudden or unexpected, involve a shocking nature of events, and produce feelings of horror, terror, or helplessness. Some examples of traumatic events include:

- Physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Witnessing or being the direct victim of interpersonal violence (domestic, dating violence)
- Witnessing or being the direct victim of community violence (gang violence, riots, school shootings)
- Severe motor vehicle and other accidents
- Medical trauma including severe injury or life threatening illness
- Natural and human-made disasters
- Accidental or intentional sudden death of a loved one or peer
- Exposure to war, terrorism or refugee conditions

Research has shown that adolescents who encounter a traumatic event may experience social, emotional and even academic consequences as a result. Adolescents experiencing a traumatic event may be more prone to engage in risky behaviors, less likely to make realistic evaluations of danger and safety, and may experience symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Children and youth may demonstrate one or many of the following post traumatic responses:

- Anxiety and/or Anger
- Suicidal Thoughts or Feelings
- Depression
- Substance Abuse and Drinking
- Fear
- Frequent mood changes
- Truancy
- Fighting
- Impaired concentration and problem solving abilities
- Withdrawal from relationships
- Difficulty communicating
- Poor school performance

A Simple Way Safe2Tell Colorado Can Help

In the aftermath of traumatic events, Safe2Tell Colorado engages young people to know the importance of what to look for and to watch for so they can be better equipped to identify people who may need help. They can also trust that day or night, when they report concerns directly to Safe2Tell Colorado, it will be followed up on.

If a child or youth has experienced a traumatic event and you witness him or her engaging in risky or harmful behavior, you can make an anonymous Safe2Tell Colorado report which alerts a team of caring, committed adults of the situation. Safe2Tell Colorado reports do lead to interventions for struggling youth and children, and provides the accountability and follow-up required to ensure action is taken on every concern received.

Additional Resources:

- Sandy Hook Columbine Cooperative: [http://sandyhookcolumbine.org/](http://sandyhookcolumbine.org/)
- Center for Study and Prevention of Violence: [http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/)