

More Water than Fire

Trauma can find us when the threat has passed, as echoes of fear and confusion. These sounds are often loudest for our youngest, most vulnerable, developing children.

For many the noises fade, for others they reverberate.

Feeling safe again is what makes the most difference.

Safety soothes trauma like water soothes fire.

We need more water than fire.

Children need to not feel alone. They need you alongside of them. Tell them you love them and that you will always love them.

Children need re-assurance-
"We will get through this. It won't always be like this. There are people who will help us. A lot of people care about us. I will look after you. You are safe with me."

Children need their feelings to be acknowledged and validated. "I know that you were scared. I was too. I can see you are still worried. You had a nightmare last night. It is really hard that we are not home."

Children need to feel listened to, and that they can count on your full attention being available at regular times, even if it's just 15 minutes at a time.

Ways parents and carers can build safety with children touched by fire

Children need their questions answered. "I don't know if the fires will come back, but we know what to do if they do, there are places we can go, and people who can help us."

Some children could need specialist help to grieve and slowly recover, some won't. The intensity of the fear and uncertainty is different for everyone.

Create space for children to express themselves through play or art, or writing. They may show you what is important and give you clues as to what they might need. Be open to the messages that might emerge. Play and art can help children speak in ways not available through words.

Children need to know that danger has been a visitor, but it doesn't live here. They need to know that after the threat has passed, safety can flow in.

