

Kimochis®



Holding Hope in Hard Times

After any stressful event it's normal to feel completely out of balance. Your mind is freaking out. Your body is freaking out. You can't tell the difference between what's happening in real-time versus the tape playing in your head of what you survived. Everything feels turned upside down and inside out. 11 year old Oliver Casurella remembers feeling frightened after a 7.0 magnitude earthquake shook his city and body while at school in Anchorage, Alaska. "It felt like the earth was possessed. I remember feeling like my adrenaline was pretty high...waiting for the next aftershock. It helped me to have a trusted adult around and to say to myself "That's it. You survived this earthquake and if there are other ones after this, they will probably be smaller." Oliver held hope that, with time, he would get through what happened.

Here are some practical ways to help kids (and yourself) recover after disaster has struck:

1. Help Ground Kids (and yourself) by letting them know that a big scary thing happened, and their amazing bodies knew just what to do to keep themselves as safe as possible. Even though the earth has stopped shaking, it takes time for our bodies to feel safe and calm again.
2. Give kids (and yourself) plenty of time to share mixed feelings about what's happened. Kids can even make up new feeling words like 10 year old Greta did, "I felt nerv-ited after the earthquake, both nervous and excited at the same!" Encourage kids to write, draw or act out their stories if they feel like it. If not, that's ok too.
3. Even with the best intentions, parents can sometimes get in the way of kids healing. We project our anxiety on them. Reading the news too much can keep you feeling on edge. Instead of being in reactivity, choose to stay present. Kids can be our best teachers in this. Remember to play, laugh and find the good in every new day. Here are other ideas to hold onto to help aid in recovery:

Feelings to Hold in Hard Times

- **Hold Uncomfortable**- Hard times brings feelings that are hard to hold. Take inventory of what hard-to-have feelings you are having. Feelings want to be felt.
- **Hold Curious**- Feelings live in the body. Stay curious about what you are feeling and where it is in your body. Remember that all feelings are okay.
- **Hold Kind**- Beware of negative thoughts that stick during hard times. Try to hold kind and true thoughts towards yourself and others.
- **Hold Hope**- Hope can help our hard to have feelings. Hope believes that we will find a way through this hard time.

