

HOW DOES THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MY SON/ DAUGHTER AFFECT HIS/ HER SIBLINGS?

We will now focus on the situation that other children or adolescents in the family are going through. Perhaps some of them can even be siblings of the missing child.

We must keep in mind that children in the family will be impressed by the events. It is possible that children at younger ages may be concerned about aspects such as their own security, their family, their future ... Pay attention to identify if your son or daughter has any risk of being vulnerable to this event.

The reaction of each child depends on their age, temperament and ways of coping. There are individual differences, some children prefer to talk about these issues, others are more reserved and do not want to.

Some children may become more restless and others, although apparently more adapted to the situation, can have difficulties after the disappearance of their loved one.

Relatives of the family environment must try to maintain **an attitude of SERENITY, especially with children**. If parents are not able to keep that attitude in the beginning, this task must be assumed by a relative or someone they trust.

- **Don't be afraid to talk about the traumatic situation with your children** (Mind always their age and be careful that it doesn't become the only conversation topic with them).
- It is important **that they can express themselves, give their opinion and say what they feel**. It is positive to listen to them in order to deal with the situation in the most favorable way for them.

- **Let your children know that you love them;** they now need you to be with them more than ever.
- **Let your sons / daughters look for his brother or sister with a relative,** so that they can also be active members of the search, **if they want.**
- **Avoid exposing your sons / daughters to the media** (if this situation occurs), interviews can be traumatic for them. Take care that they are preserved and respected.
- **Make them feel as important as your missing child.** They also need to feel loved and protected.
- **Help your children face their own fears and anxieties.**
- If your children need **professional help**, do not hesitate to provide them with it so they can elaborate the situation properly.
- Pay **special attention to those children who previously have had some difficulties** before the disappearance.
- **It's normal that your children behavior change**, to wet the bed, missing school, that they express anger, depression ... are common reactions.
- **Talk with your children teacher** before returning to school to help them prepare to go back to school.
- Keep celebrating **family events**, planning them in advance, your sons / daughters need to share these special moments with you, although this mean an initial effort to you.

HOW DO I TELL MY CHILDREN?

- **Before telling your child** that his or her brother/ sister has disappeared, **ask him/ her** what he/she knows, what does he/ she fears and what does he/ she think.
- Try to choose the **children emotionally closest person** to tell them that his/her brother or sister has disappeared.
- **Talk to your children honestly**, don't lie to them. It is important that you always answer their questions and don't give them more information that they can assume.
- Be careful of how you express your emotions to your children to **avoid over-dramatizing**, but **if you ever cry, don't feel guilty**, it's natural.
- Tell your children that this situation, despite of its end, **can be overcome**.

Finally, remember that the 116000 hotline service is a team of professionals made of psychologists, social workers and lawyers. We are at your disposal to counsel and support you through the whole search of your son/ daughter, providing you and your relatives psychologically specialized support, 24 hours a day all seven days of the week.

If you want more information please go through our website:
www.anar.org/116000

