

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Through Common Reactions to Distress



FOR 7 TO 10 YEAR OLDS

At this age, children are more able to talk about their thoughts and feelings and can better handle difficulties, but they still look to parents for comfort and guidance. Listening to them demonstrates your commitment. When scary things happen, seeing that parents can still parent may be the most reassuring thing for a frightened child.

What you can do:

- Reassure your child that they are safe. Children this age are comforted by facts. Knowledge is empowering and helps relieve anxiety.
- Keep things as “normal” as possible. Bedtime and mealtime routines help kids feel safe and secure. If you are in self-isolation, establish new routines and give them some choice in the matter—for example, let them choose which story to tell at bedtime. This gives them a sense of control during an uncertain time.
- Limit exposure to TV, newspapers and radio. The more bad news school-age kids are exposed to, the more worried they will be. If they do watch a news report or listen to the radio, sit with them so you can talk about it afterward.
- Let them know that it is okay to ask questions and to express concerns or sadness. Use family time (such as mealtime) to talk about what is happening in the family as well as in the community. Also ask what their friends have been saying, so you can make sure to correct any misinformation.
- Answer questions briefly but honestly. Usually children ask a question because they are worried about something specific. Give a reassuring answer. If you do not know an answer to a question, it is okay to say, “I don’t know.” Do not speculate or repeat rumours.
- Keep children busy. Daily activities, such as playing with friends or going to school, may have been disrupted. Help kids think of alternative activities and organize digital connections with others.
- Calm worries about friends’ safety. Reassure your children that their friends’ parents are taking care of them just as they are being cared for by you.
- Encourage kids to lend a hand. This will give them a sense of accomplishment and purpose at a time when they may feel helpless. Younger children can do small tasks for you; older ones can contribute to volunteer projects in the community.
- Find the hope. Children need to see the future to recover. Kids this age appreciate specifics. Point out those who are helping, such as buying groceries for seniors or offering to get supplies for those in isolation.

INFORMATION ADAPTED FROM

Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event:

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/>

PLEASE VISIT HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION