

- Teach tolerance and explain prejudice to prevent stereotyping and blaming of groups of people, religions or cultures.
- Talk to the children about acts of kindness, support and community when bad things happen. Help them to see that there are more people who are prepared to do good than do us harm.

- Stick to your normal routines - children are reassured by structure and familiarity.



- Provide positive distractions— sports, clubs, activities, reading, playing games and meeting up with friends etc

Things to be aware of:

- Children who have already experienced trauma or losses may show more intense reactions to tragedies or news of terrorist incidents. Be aware that these children may need extra support and attention.

- Children may show anxiety and stress through complaints of physical aches and pains.
- Communication between home and school is very important. It is helpful if parents / carers are informed about activities and discussions at school.

Seeking professional help and advice:

Professional advice may be required if a child is having difficulty with their day to day functioning e.g. sleeping problems, having upsetting thoughts, images or fears, difficulty separating from parents / carers and difficulty attending school.

Professional intervention is not normally recommended until at least four to ten weeks after a tragic event.

Useful links:

www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/supporting-children-worried-about-terrorism/

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround

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Educational Psychology Service

HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT LIVING IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/ CARERS AND TEACHERS



Introduction

Terrorist attacks, natural disasters and other tragic events can be very distressing and unsettling to adults as well as children. It can raise fears and anxieties for children about their own safety and the safety of others.

Although it may be natural for us to try to protect children from upsetting news events, the reality is that children will be aware that something has happened, either through television, media, overheard conversations between adults or simply from talk amongst other children.



This leaflet has been written to help adults to support children and young people who may be worried about recent events.

What you can do

It is very important that children are helped to feel more secure and have a better understanding of the world in which they live.

Parents / carers and teachers can help by listening and responding in an honest, consistent, and supportive way. Most children, even those exposed to trauma, are actually quite resilient. Like most adults, they can, and do, get through difficult times.

Talk to Children

Provide opportunities to talk about what has happened.

- Find out what children know about what has happened and try to correct any misunderstandings.



- Invite questions and try to answer as honestly as you can.

- Try to keep your explanations simple and appropriate to the age, level of understanding and maturity of each child.

- Be prepared to repeat your explanations or have several conversations. Some information may be hard to accept or difficult to understand.

- Be patient and allow children to ask the same questions over and over again, as this may be a way of gaining reassurance.

- Ask or acknowledge how children are feeling and reassure them that it is okay to feel this way. In some circumstances it may be helpful to share how you are feeling about the incident but try not to burden children with your concerns, as this may increase their anxieties.



- Don't force children to talk about troubling events unless they want to. Children may not want to think or talk a lot about something that has happened. It is ok if they would rather play outside, ride their bike, or play on their video games. We all deal with difficult events in our own way.

- Some children may not be able to talk about their thoughts, feelings, or fears. They may be more comfortable drawing pictures, playing with toys, or writing stories or poems directly or indirectly related to current events.

Help children to feel safe

- Try to limit children's exposure to upsetting images or TV news. Try to direct them to age appropriate media coverage such as Newsround, First News (children's newspaper) and CBBC website.

- Watch for possible preoccupation with violent movies or war themed computer games. Please be aware of age restrictions on these games. They are there for good reason!

- Help children to gain perspective on the events. Terrorist attacks, murders and major disasters are **very, very rare**—that's why they are in the news. However, the level of media coverage can make it appear more common and more risky.