

Post Crisis Parent Tips

Focus on your children during this time. Tell them you love them and everything will be okay. Try to help them understand what has happened, keeping in mind their developmental level.

Make time to talk with your children. Remember if you do not talk to your children about this incident someone else will. Take some time and determine what you wish to say.

Stay close to your children. Your physical presence will reassure them and give you the opportunity to monitor their reaction. Many children will want actual physical contact. Give plenty of hugs. Let them sit close to you, and make sure to take extra time at bedtime to cuddle and to reassure them they are loved and safe.

Limit your child's television viewing events. If they must watch, watch with them for a brief time; then turn the set off. Don't sit mesmerized re-watching the same events over and over again.

Maintain a "normal" routine. To the extent possible stick to your family's normal routine for dinner, homework, chores, bedtime, etc., *but don't be inflexible*. Children may have a hard time concentrating on schoolwork or falling asleep at night.

Spend extra time reading or playing quiet games with your children before bed. These activities are calming, foster a sense of closeness and security, and reinforce a sense of normalcy. Spend more time tucking them in. Let them sleep with a light on if they ask for it.

Safeguard your children's physical health. Stress can take a physical toll on children as well as adults. Make sure your children get appropriate sleep, exercise, and nutrition.

Consider praying or thinking hopeful thoughts for the victim and their families. It may be a good time to take your children to your place of worship, write a poem, or draw a picture to help our child express their feelings and feel that they are somehow supporting the victims and their families.

Find out what resources your school has in place to help children cope. Most schools will stay open and are in fact a good place for children to maintain a sense of connectedness to people they know and trust. Some children will find being in lockdown mode frightening or unsettling. Reassure them that it is very unlikely that something bad will happen at their school but that adults are being extra cautious and that the emergency procedures help keep everyone safe. Schools should also have a plan for making counseling available to children and adults who need it. Don't force your child to go to school if they are frightened.

This material is adapted from information posted on the NASP website September, 2001.