WEDGWOOD CHRISTIAN SERVICES®

Talking to Kids about Tragedy Tip Sheet

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Be Available

- Know that this is a hard time not only for your children, but also for you as a caregiver. Processing feelings as an adult can be difficult. **Allow space to reflect on the emotions that you and your child experience.**

Know Yourself

- **Know what you need as a caregiver in order to regulate the hard feelings and anxiety that you may be experiencing in this time.** As caregivers, it is important for you to feel secure and safe in order to assist in regulating the children in your care.

Know That You Won't Always Have the Answers

- Unfortunately, we may not always have the answers to the questions that our children ask. Even though we might not have specific information, **developmentally appropriate and reassuring answers of safety is the key answer to any question.**

Identify Key Supporters in Your and Your Children's Lives

- **During times of tragedy, positive support is a high factor for resiliency.** Identifying key people in your life that you can go to if you are struggling or need to process is important. Identify and naming other appropriate and safe adults for your children to talk to in the community and at their school is also important to feel safe and secure in their environment.

Allow Time

- Allow time for you and your kids to be together. **Heighten your child's sense of security and safety by spending time as a family.** Enhance the communication between each other while also practicing self-care through connectiveness and distraction.

Therapeutic Support

- **Your mental health matters.** During this time, it is important to understand and watch for signs and signals of distress. Some signs to look out for are:
    - **Difficulties sleeping:** If you or your child are experiencing frequent nights where falling asleep or staying asleep is difficult. If you or your child is experiencing racing thoughts, nightmares, or sleeping too much during the day, you may need therapeutic support.
    - **Changes in appetite:** Not feeling hungry, or eating too much every once in a while, is normal, however, if you notice that you or your child's appetite has changed for more than a couple days, this may be a sign of distress.
    - **Hypervigilance: -or- Constantly being on the lookout for danger.** Safety planning is important, as well as knowing your surroundings, BUT if you notice that you or your child's ability to function is impaired due to constantly being aware of things that may be a threat, it may be time to seek therapeutic assistance.
        - *Wedgwood has immediate openings for therapy and counseling services for children as young as 5, teens, and adults.*