

Protecting children from violence

Parents work hard to protect their children. Most parents try to keep their children from harm.

But parents do not have control over everything. Violence and harm can occur no matter what we do. Natural disasters and tragic events happen. Parents cannot completely protect a child from harm or exposure to certain events.

Any tragic event can cause a child stress. Parents need to understand this. They need to be able to help their children work through their feelings. This is true even if the child is not directly involved.

Here are a few ways you can help:

- **Take time to reflect.** People respond to events differently. Responses usually depend on past experiences. Children often lack these experiences. They may not understand why something happened. It is important to think about how your child may be feeling. Talk about your own experiences with your child. This may help your child cope.
- **Take the event seriously.** Any event can affect a child. It is important for parents to take all events seriously. Parents need to show that they will support and protect their child from danger. Even if the event was in the past. If a child is showing emotional signs, there is a reason. Listen to the child's concerns. This is important as reminders of an event occur.
- **Be open and understanding.** It affects all family members when a child goes through a tragic event. Some family members may feel the best way to cope is to not talk about it. Others may want to talk about it all the time. It is good to talk about feelings. But some children may not know how to talk about what they are feeling. Give your child time. Be there for your child.

- **Understand the healing process.** Things seem different after a tragic event. There might be life-changing effects. Children have a great ability to adjust. They can find a way to cope. This is part of the healing process. It is important to respect the healing process. Each individual needs time to recover. Parents need to support their children during this time.

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