

#5. They need to hear it from YOU.

Tips for Talking to Kids about Trauma in the Media

There have been many frightening events in the news lately. As parents, we need to know how to share this information in ways that our children can manage and that are age appropriate.

Here's how you can have your SAY with your child:

1. **Gear what you say to the age of your child.** Give honest, accurate and age appropriate information.
2. **Always put the information in context.** There are far more good people than people who aim to hurt and the vast majority of time we are safe.
3. **Encourage your child to talk by asking questions.** What have you heard? What have you seen on TV or other media?
4. **Encourage your child to share their feelings and fears.** Model this by sharing your feelings with your child.
5. **Know that your child may need more support from you than normal.** Physical affection is a great way to show support in frightening times.
6. **For Elementary School-Age Children**
 - Talk about major events with your children so that they hear about it first from you. This way you know they will hear accurate facts.
 - Reassure them that you are here to keep them safe.
 - Limit how much they see on TV or other media sources.
 - Don't talk about these events prior to bedtime.
7. **Middle/High School-Age Children**
 - Assume that older children will hear about news events – maybe as quickly as you. Ask them what they have heard and correct rumors or misinformation with facts.
 - Know that even though they are teens, they can still be frightened and can still feel comfort from talking to or being with you.
 - Though teens may not verbalize their feelings or fears, this does not mean they are not thinking about it or that you do not need to address it.
 - Talk to teens about what they can do to feel safe such as safety measures already in place in their schools or who to contact in times of crisis.
 - Keep tabs on social media for rumors or other information that may be circulating and that your teen may be exposed to.
8. **Be aware of signs that your child is struggling and know when to get help.** Look for changes in sleep and appetite, fixation on recent trauma, sleep disturbance or fears of separation or going out.



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SAY – Social Advocates for Youth is a school-based prevention and early intervention program of Bellefaire JCB for students in middle and high school. The SAY Coalition sponsors educational programs, parent education, and youth leadership.