

THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM
PARENTS GUIDE

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The recent tragic acts of terrorism are unprecedented in the American experience, disrupting our sense of safety and personal security. Children, like everyone else, may be confused or frightened by the news and look to adults for information and guidance on how to react.

**THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST YOU IN SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN AS THEY
LEARN TO MANAGE THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT TERRORISM AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES.**

Overview

This guide will inform you about the information and concepts that are included in the "Impact of Terrorism" lesson being taught to your children via the Internet in their school.

It will also provide you with suggestions for supporting their learning, including topics for discussion and activities that integrate the lesson with real-life experiences.

Lesson Name

The Impact of Terrorism

Topics Covered

- Helping children cope by establishing a sense of safety and security.
- Examples of how traumatic events may cause changes in a child's behavior.
- Communication with your child.
- Recognizing how your child is handling the internal conflicts created by terrorism.
- Questions that children may ask of adults.
- Managing stresses and fears produced by acts of terrorism.
- What you can do to help your child.

Lesson Objectives

- Obtain insight into how terrorism affects people.
- Identify and manage issues that bother you about terrorism.
- Understand how you can deal with terrorism on a personal level.

Discuss With Your Child

- What has happened since September 11, 2001? Put events into the context of your lives and your community.
- What you can do to help them feel more safe and secure.
- Their concerns and the concerns of their friends. Air travel is a topic that can provide you with much insight.
- That it is okay to feel upset. Remind your child that terrorism is designed to produce such feelings.
- The news of the day. Separate fact from fiction. Parents are important in rumor control.
- That "the world has indeed changed and our lives will never be the same." Discuss the good and bad points.
- What your child's school is doing regarding terrorism education. Do they provide any counseling or other support?

Activities you can do with your child

- Watch a television news show together and discuss how they feel about what's going on in the world.
- Pick a story from the news about an ongoing dispute. Discuss how they would handle the dispute.
- Get involved in a civic or religious group involved in dealing with the aftermath of terrorism. The activities could include fundraising, community outreach, etc.

What you can do

- Be a model of calm and control. Children take their emotional cues from the significant adults in their lives. Avoid appearing anxious or frightened.
- Be prepared to talk to your children.
- Think about how your children dealt with crises in the past and consider trying now what helped them when they were upset or worried before.
- Reassure children that they are safe and so are the other important adults in their lives.
- Remind them that trustworthy people are in charge and that things are being done to protect them.
- Let children talk about their feelings and help put them into perspective. Even anger is okay, but children may need help and patience from adults to assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
- Observe your child's emotional state. Depending on their age, children may not express their concerns verbally.
- Tell children the truth. Children are smart. They will be more worried if they think you are too afraid to tell them what is happening.
- Stick to the facts. Don't embellish or speculate about what has happened and what might happen. Don't dwell on the scale or scope of the September 11, 2001 tragedy, particularly with young children.
- Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate. High school students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society.
- Monitor Your Own Stress Level.

In summary

Communicate and listen to your children.

Set a good example, first by dealing with your own fears about terrorism.

Work with your children to take a positive and constructive approach to managing those issues that bother you about terrorism.