

*THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM
TEACHER 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 STUDENTS 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 currently available to your students via the Internet in your school.

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

Lesson Name

The Impact of Terrorism

Topics Covered

- Helping students cope by establishing a sense of safety and security.
- Examples of how traumatic events may cause changes in a child's behavior.
- Guidelines for dealing with your students.
- Recognizing how your students are handling the internal conflicts created by terrorism.
- Guidelines for objectively addressing the issue of terrorism
- Helping your students address the stresses and fears produced by acts of terrorism.
- Questions for discussion.

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 Students

- What has happened since September 11, 2001? Put events into the context of your school and your community.
- What you and your school can do to help students feel more safe and secure. What is your campus climate? What are your school's resources for terrorism education, counseling or other support?
- What will be the long term social, political and economic "fallout" from terrorism?
- Student 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 students that terrorism is designed to produce such feelings.
- The news of the day. Separate fact from fiction. Teachers 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.
- How would you advise a friend who was "freaked out" by the thought of terrorism?
- Their individual reactions to the media coverage relating to terrorism. How would they handle the coverage?
- What would you do if you discovered information about a terrorist act in the planning stages? What would you do if it involved a friend?

Discuss With Your Students (continued)

- Why are the attacks of September 11th being compared to the bombing of Pearl Harbor? How have people in other countries responded to terrorism? Give examples such as in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, etc.
- Encourage students to synthesize their feelings and ideas about the September 11, 2001 terrorist acts or subsequent terrorist threats by writing a reflective journal.

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 students. Make yourself accessible. Seek assistance if necessary.
- Reassure your students 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 students talk about their feelings and help put them into perspective. Even anger is okay, but students may need help and patience from adults to assist them in expressing these feelings appropriately.
- Observe your classroom's emotional state. Depending on their age, students may not express their concerns verbally.
- Tell the truth. As you know, students 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 younger students.
- 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 students

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

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

Remind your students that:

There is no formula for dealing with terrorism.

Terrorism is designed to make its victims feel powerless and fearful.

Terrorism is not an event. It's a process punctuated by an event or the threat of an event.

No person is immune from the impact of terrorism – it's just a matter of degree.

Don't be tempted to reduce this complex topic to simplistic, boilerplate sound bites.