

Talking to Your Children about Violence

Children are likely to be frightened, confused and unclear about what has happened. As adults, we may be too. Listen to your children and talk to them, at their own level of understanding. Acknowledge your children's thoughts and feelings. Show them you are listening and understand. Suspend judgment. It is important for them to trust you and to be able to speak openly about all of their thoughts and feelings.

Managing your own needs and reactions will help everyone in the family. Take time to take care of yourself. Check on your own feelings and needs. Use your resources to work through your needs and feelings to the best of your ability. It is important that children see that you are calm; it relieves their anxiety

Take extra care to maintain a warm, loving, accepting, and open environment. It is OK to let some things go that are not as important. It may be a good time to take time to play a game together and share activities you enjoy.

Observe your children's behavior; it is a way of talking to you too. Crying, isolation increased fighting and argumentation, accidents, clinging or any behavior change, may be speaking to you about feelings of fear or lack of control.

Ask for your children's help and cooperation. Have them conduct small jobs they are capable of doing, and praise them for their assistance. This will help them feel productive and in control of themselves.

Share your feelings honestly with your children . "I hate what is happening. It frightens me too. I'm going to do my best to take care of all of us and keep us safe. It is very hard to understand how and why someone could do this."

Talk to your children about anger and healthy ways to handle anger.

Offer physical reassurance – hugs, time together. Offer all of the realistic reassurance that you can.

Continue to use your parenting skills, knowledge of your child and family traditions to reaffirm your love for one another, and to offer support and comfort.

The EAP is available 24/7 to assist you in guiding your discussion with your child. The EAP has the information and the resources to help you in having difficult conversations about stressful situations like this.

The free, confidential, professional Employee Assistance Program is available to employees and their immediate family members

**1-800-EAP-4-YOU
TTY: 1-877-492-7341**

www.eap4you.com

