



As the details of the recent Las Vegas shooting, and a myriad of stressful events throughout the nation and world unfold, children often look to parents and teachers for understanding and guidance.

The following is a compilation of strategies and important points to consider when discussing a tragedy or crisis with children.

- Make time to talk. Let the children's questions be the guide as to how much information is provided.
- Reassure children that they are safe and schools are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and staff.
- Some experts suggest to limit television viewing regarding details of the school shooting.
- Validate emotions. Explain that all feelings are understandable when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about and express their feelings. Help put emotions into perspective and assist children in sharing their feelings appropriately.
- Early elementary school children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them.
- Upper elementary and early middle school children may be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their respective school. They may need assistance separating reality from imagination. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders who work to provide safe school environments. Safety drills and procedures are in place to maintain and protect wellbeing.
- Upper middle school and high school students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. Emphasize the role and support that students can offer in maintaining safe schools.
- As staff review safety procedures in schools. Parents are encouraged to address procedures and safeguards at home, as well.
- It is suggested, given the best of all possibilities, that the maintenance of normal routines be followed.
- School support and counseling specialists will, as always, be made available for students and staff, as needed.

http://k6educators.about.com/od/helpfornewteachers/tp/discuss_tragedy.htm
<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/index.aspx>