

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OF BUDAPEST

Some guidelines for talking with children and teens from one of ICSB's school counselors

Big Idea - Validate questions and feelings, give relevant information that helps them process. We would expect to see some or all of the following concerns from kids:

Death-related:

- Confusion - what is covid? Why are some people recovering and some people not?
- What does this mean?
- What happens when a person dies?
- Does it hurt?
- Why do people have to die?

School-related:

- What will happen now at school?
- Will I see Mrs. Bishop again?
- Who will be the new principal?

Safety-Related:

- Will I get Covid too?
- What if mom and dad get Covid?
- What do I do if I get it?
- Will I die`?
- What can I do to protect myself?
- If Mrs. Bishop washed her hands and wore her mask, how come she still got so sick?

According to the National Children's Center, children say they are more worried about catching Covid than they are about fitting in with other children or peer pressure. The only thing that measures more, is the fear of being bullied (close to 40%).

Feeling-Related:

Frustrated, Scared, Alone, Upset, helpless/powerless, Anxious/Nervous,

Some things we can do: (*Important in light of the powerlessness to talk about the things we can do to help keep ourselves safe*)

- Limit media so we can keep our information accurate
- Have a plan: Practice Safety, Think About it and Do it
- Talk about it when questions come, but keep it moving. (Here's where listening is so important - move at the child's pace keeping an eye on when the pace bogs down.)
- Listen Well - Validate & Reassure
- Manage information
- Keep checking in
- Keep it Simple - no graphic images, far reaching concepts, long sermons or hypotheses



INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OF BUDAPEST

SPACE TO GRIEVE

Big Idea - Grief must be moved through not completed. So, we move through:

- Shock/Confusion/Disbelief - by listening and letting them give voice to it.
- Anger (I don't like it that it happened. I don't like Covid.) - Validate and give them space to express - i.e. draw a picture of one thing you don't like about Covid. Or one thing you don't like about people being sick....
- Sadness - (I miss Mrs. Bishop). Space to talk about what they will miss
- Acceptance (is it ok if I don't miss her as much now as I did before?)
- New Normal - (I miss the way things were and Mrs. Bishop, but I like the good things that are happening now. I will remember the good things Mrs. Bishop did for me.

We need to allow a lot of time up front for this, then watch for grief "pop ups" as weeks progress. Looking for where the child might get stuck in one of the categories above which we would know by the theme of the questions they ask.

COMMUNITY • INTEGRITY • GROWTH

+36 23 381 986

2049 DIÓSD, IFJÚSÁG ÚT 11., HUNGARY
WWW.ICSBUDAPEST.ORG