

Tips for Parents 2022

As parents, teachers, and other supportive adults, we can't always protect children from witnessing violence and tragedy in the world. What we can do is comfort and communicate with children in the most helpful way possible.

Often parents and supportive adults don't know what to say or how to approach difficult subjects. Below is a guide and list of resources for having difficult conversations with kids about tragedies.

1. Initiate conversation and find out what they know. It's always helpful to start from their perspective and guide the conversation based on what they share with you. This helps you understand if they have heard rumors or other misinformation related to the incident.
 - a. "How do you feel about what's happening in the world?"
 - b. "What are you or your friends thinking and talking about in terms of the world situation?"
 - c. "Are you and your friends talking about what happened? I'd be really interested in hearing about what you think. Let me know if you want to talk."
2. Acknowledge the emotions your child shares with you. There is no right or wrong emotion in circumstances that are frightening or out of our control.
3. Make assurances and reaffirm their current physical safety. While you cannot assure future safety, you can review and share what measures are in place for safety. It's helpful for children to know that the adults have a plan and are thoughtful about continued safety.
4. Do not be afraid to admit that you cannot answer all of their questions. Answer questions at a level the child can understand and do not provide details that aren't necessary.
5. Monitor children's television and media exposure. Access to graphic or troubling scenes is readily available. To the extent possible, be present when your child is watching coverage of the event. It is at these times that questions might arise.
6. Reframe and focus on the good. In difficult circumstances, it's always helpful to point out actions taken that were helpful in a tragic event, such as heroic actions by citizens, police, first responders, etc.

If you feel your child needs assistance at school over the following days, please contact your child's campus counselor. Additionally, MISD has resources for parents, families and students through Care Solace. Midlothian ISD partnered with Care Solace to support our community's mental health. Care Solace can help you quickly find mental health or substance use treatment options matched to your needs regardless of circumstances. Their support is completely confidential and free to Midlothian ISD students, staff, and families.

If you would like to use Care Solace to help you find a provider:

- Call 888-515-0595 available 24/7/365 in any language
- Visit www.caresolace.com/midlothian and either search on your own OR click "Book Appointment" for assistance by video chat, email, or phone.

In an emergency:

- Call 911 or request a Crisis Intervention Trained response
- Go to the closest emergency room for support
- Text "Hello" or "Home" to 741741 to connect with support
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255
 - English: 800-273-TALK
 - Español: 888-628-9454
 - TTY: 800-799-4889
 - Online chat: suicidepreventionlifeline.org