

Dear IC parents,

We are writing to you today with heavy hearts, as we are all processing the recent traumatic and violent events that have deeply affected us.

It is important to come together as a community during this challenging time and support one another, especially our children, who may be experiencing a range of emotions and behaviors in response to these events.

In the wake of such distressing circumstances, it is natural for children to exhibit a variety of reactions.



What emotions and behaviors to expect in response to a traumatic experience

Kids may exhibit various emotions and behaviors in response to a traumatic event. These behaviors can vary depending on the age and personality of the child.

1. Emotional Responses:

- **Fear and Anxiety:** Many kids may express fear and anxiety about their safety or the safety of loved ones.
- **Sadness and Grief:** Kids may show signs of sadness, mourning, or grief, including crying and withdrawal.
- **Anger:** Some kids may exhibit anger, frustration, or irritability, which can be a way of expressing their feelings.

2. Changes in Behavior:

- **Withdrawal:** Some kids may become quieter or more reserved and prefer to be alone.
- **Regression:** Younger kids might regress to behaviors they've outgrown, such as bedwetting or thumb-sucking.
- **Sleep Disturbances:** Changes in sleep patterns, such as nightmares, insomnia, or night terrors, may occur.
- **Changes in appetite:** Increase or decrease in appetite.

3. Academic Impact:

- **Decreased Concentration:** Kids might have difficulty concentrating on schoolwork and experience decreased academic performance.
- **Disinterest in Learning:** Some kids may lose interest in their studies or extracurricular activities.

4. Physical Symptoms:

- **Physical Complaints:** Some kids may complain of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical symptoms related to stress.
- **Changes in Appetite:** Appetite changes, such as increased or decreased eating, are possible.

It's important to remember that these behaviors are common responses to trauma, and they are often ways for children to cope with the overwhelming emotions they are experiencing. It's essential for parents, caregivers, and educators to be patient, understanding, and supportive during this challenging time. Encourage open communication, provide a safe space for children to express their feelings, and consider seeking professional help if behaviors persist or worsen.

5. Behavioral Changes:

- **Hyperactivity:** For some children, hyperactive behavior, restlessness, or an inability to sit still may increase.
- **Clinginess:** Younger kids may become more attached to their parents or caregivers.
- **Social Isolation:** Kids may avoid social interactions or playdates with friends.

6. Avoidance and Denial:

- Some kids may try to avoid discussing or thinking about the traumatic event, while others may deny that it had any impact on them.

7. Aggression or Oppositional Behavior:

- In some cases, kids may exhibit aggressive or oppositional behavior as a way of coping with their feelings.

8. Seeking Reassurance:

- Kids may repeatedly seek reassurance from adults, asking questions about safety or the event.



What questions students might ask in the wake of a traumatic event and how to respond

These answers should be adjusted based on the child's age, comprehension level, and individual needs. The key is to provide honest, age-appropriate information, and reassure them of your support and their safety.

1. "Why did this happen?"

- **Answer:** "Sometimes, bad things happen in the world, and it's not always easy to understand why. It's important to know that it was not anyone's fault here, and we are here to support each other."

2. "Can this happen again?"

- **Answer:** "It's hard to predict the future. We will always be vigilant and prepared."

3. "Is this going to happen to us?"

- **Answer:** "We are doing everything we can to keep you safe, and we will continue to take measures to protect our family."

4. "What will happen to the families of the victims?"

- **Answer:** "The families are going through a very tough time, and they may need support and comfort. There are organizations and people in our community helping them."



5. "Are we safe at school?"

- **Answer:** "Yes, we are working to make sure that our school is a safe and secure place. We have procedures in place to keep everyone safe."

6. "How can we help those affected?"

- **Answer:** "There are many ways we can help, such as sending condolences, donations, or participating in community events to support those in need. We can discuss how you'd like to contribute."

7. "Will things ever go back to normal?"

- **Answer:** "It may take time, but with love, support, and resilience, we can eventually return to a sense of normalcy."

8. "How can I make sure my family and friends are safe?"

- **Answer:** "You can stay in touch with your family and friends, and together, we will take steps to stay safe and protect each other."



9. "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

- **Answer:** "It's one of life's most challenging questions. Sometimes, bad things happen to anyone, regardless of how good they are. It reminds us to appreciate and support each other."

10. "Can I talk to someone about my feelings?"

- **Answer:** "Absolutely. You can talk to us (your parents) or a counselor anytime you feel the need to express your feelings. We are here for you."

11. "What can we do to remember those who were lost?"

- **Answer:** "We can create memorials, hold moments of silence, or participate in acts of kindness in their memory. It's a way to honor their lives. Today, the IC community stood 1 minute of silence in the memory of those who tragically passed away."



12. "Will the world ever be a better place?"

- **Answer:** "Yes, we believe in a better world. We can all work together to make it a more peaceful and loving place. IC aims at helping you become global leaders and good citizens of tomorrow."

13. "Is it okay to be happy or have fun when something like this has happened?"

- **Answer:** "Yes, it's okay to find moments of happiness and have fun. It's a way to cope with difficult times."

Please remember that our school counseling team is here to support you and your children during these challenging times. If you notice any significant changes in your child's behavior or emotions that are causing concern, do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are committed to providing the necessary guidance and resources to help our community navigate through this difficult period.

Together, as a resilient and caring community, we can work towards healing and supporting each other through these trying times.

Sincerely,
IC Counseling Department

*How adults should react
when talking to kids
in the wake of a traumatic event*

- Model calm and control.
- Reassure children they are safe.
- Remind them that trustworthy people are in charge.
- Let children know it is okay to feel upset.
- Tell children the truth.
- Stick to the facts.
- Maintain a "normal" routine.
- Monitor or restrict exposure to the crisis.
- Observe children's emotional state.
- Be aware of children at greater risk.
- Provide an outlet for children's desire to help.
- Keep lines of communication open between home and school.
- Monitor your own stress level.
- Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate and brief. Don't give details unless the child keeps on asking.

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