

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT VIOLENCE: Tips for Parents and Educators

Reaffirm Safety: Emphasize that schools are very safe. Let children speak about their feelings and validate all reactions to the event. Support the appropriate expression of their feelings and help to put them in perspective.

Make Time to Talk: Let children's questions guide the information provided. Be patient and look for clues that a child wants to talk. Young children may need concrete activities and older children may prefer writing or playing music.

Keep Explanations Developmentally Appropriate:

Early Elementary: Provide simple information, balanced by an assurance of safety.

Upper Elementary and Early Middle: Answer questions and assist in separating reality from fantasy.

Upper Middle and High: Emphasize the student's role in safety and how to access support.

Review Safety Procedures: Help children identify one adult at school and in the community that they can go to if they feel threatened or at risk. Review procedures and safeguards in school and home settings.

Observe Children's Emotional State: Some will not express themselves verbally but changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns can indicate anxiety or stress. Seek help from a mental health professional for those with more intense reactions.

Maintain a Normal Routine: Keep a regular schedule to assure and promote physical and mental health. Encourage maintenance of school work and extracurricular activities but do not push children if they seem overwhelmed.

BCPS Family Counseling Program
754-321-1590

Youth Emergency Services
YES Team
954-677-3113
hendersonbh.org

Southeast Florida Trauma
Recovery Network (TRN)
561-501-1008
southeastfloridatrnr.org

Children's Bereavement Center
305-668-4902
childbereavement.org

Tomorrow's Rainbow, Inc.
954-978-2390
tomorrowsrainbow.org

2-1-1 Broward
Dial 2-1-1 or (954) 537-0211
"First call for help"
Help available 24/7/365

National Association of
School Psychologists (NASP)
nasponline.org

Florida School Counselor Association
fla-schoolcounselor.org

National Center for School
Crisis and Bereavement
schoolcrisiscenter.org



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SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD AFTER A CRISIS

Tips and tools to help parents and families recover from tragedy



School Counseling
& BRACE Advisement

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Student Supports Initiative Division
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Established 1915
BROWARD
County Public Schools

DISTRICT SUPPORT COUNSELORS

The district support counselors are housed several days per week at different schools within the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Zone. We are here to provide outreach services in addition to the services already in place at your local schools. The point person for our services is your school-based counselor or feel free to email us with any questions or concerns.

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HELPING CHILDREN WITH TRAUMATIC GRIEF A child's point of view

Each child grieves in unique ways. Being non-judgmental, open to compromise, and considering your child's point of view are important.

1

I may feel sad, scared, empty, or numb but be embarrassed to show my true feelings. Yet, I may say too much on social media.

2

I might have behavior problems that are new or worse than before the trauma (angry outbursts, irritability, rule breaking, revenge seeking). I may be doing serious, unsafe, or harmful behaviors (self-injury, risky behavior, drug or alcohol use).

3

I have trouble concentrating and paying attention or have a change in sleep patterns, such as staying up later or sleeping in all day.

4

I may have physical reactions like jumpiness, headaches, body aches, a pounding heart, or stomach aches. These may be worse after being around people, places, sounds, situations or other things that remind me of the trauma.

5

I may think that life is meaningless, feel guilty for being okay, or withdraw from family and friends—yet retreat to social media or gaming.

6

Sometimes I wonder if something bad will happen to me or other important people in my life. I may express this by appearing anxious or worried or seeming not to care about the future (not studying, skipping school), or risk-taking behavior.

7

I may talk about feeling responsible for what happened.

8

Sometimes I might not want to talk about what happened. I may try to change or reject the topic ("leave me alone") or shrug it off. I may hide my discomfort and act as if nothing bothers me or as if I'm doing fine.

9

I might refuse to go places or do things that remind me of what happened, or of how my life has changed.

10

I may not want to talk about or remember good things about anyone who died because it brings up reminders of what happened.

If any of these problems get in the way of your child's functioning at school or home, or continue more than 1-2 months, get help from a mental health professional who has experience treating children and teens with trauma or traumatic grief.

***For more information from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, visit their website at www.nctsn.org**