

- Help your children explore their emotions, and let them know that their feelings are normal.
- Some children will want to repeat the story over and over to make sense of what has happened; other children may not talk about the incident at all. Younger children may not understand what has happened, especially in the case of death. If the child doesn't understand, explain as much as needed, but don't pressure the child into understanding. Let your children talk about the crisis as much as they need to share, allowing them to express their feelings safely without judgment.
- Explore different ways to help your children cope with the stress, and, most importantly, practice these coping skills yourself as well.
- Talking about feelings openly, exercising, getting enough sleep, laughing and taking breaks are excellent stress relievers.
- Limit your children's television viewing if you feel that the coverage of the crisis is causing too much difficulty for your son/daughter.

Caring for Kids After Trauma and Death: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS
by The Institute for Trauma and Stress at The NYU Child Study Center

- Determine your child's risk for problems. Those most at risk are children who have some personal experience with the tragedy; who may have been close to the area or have family or friends who have been hurt or killed.
- Provide reassurance. Children will be affected by a parent's mood and reaction. Calm parents encourage calm in their children. Parents can show children that they too are sad but should temper their own intense emotions.
- Keep in mind that children's reactions depend upon their age, personality and coping style. Some children want to talk about the details, some are quiet and concerned, some may show an increase in their activity level, and some may prefer to get along with business as usual.
- Don't be afraid to talk about the tragedy. Start by finding out what the children already know and have seen. Listening to the children and answering their questions helps them deal with issues in their own way.
- Be truthful and honest in answers, using language the child can understand. Hiding information causes children to feel confused, reluctant to turn to adults for help and mistrustful of other information.
- Have more than one conversation. A child's understanding and questions about difficult situations change over time. Be available and look for teachable moments for further exploration.
- Allow and encourage expression in private ways, such as through journals or art.
- Maintain as much of a usual routine as possible. Familiarity is comforting to children and provides a sense of normalcy.
- Monitor exposure to media and limit access if necessary.
- It is common for children to be more clingy, to be concerned about separation and to feel the need to be in close proximity to parents or even want to sleep with them.
- Realize that children who have had difficulty before the crisis may show a re-emergence of their problems either temporarily or over time.
- Realize that children may be more vulnerable if other stresses, such as divorce or financial problems, were occurring in the family prior to the crisis. They may need extra support and reassurance to feel in control.
- Stay involved in the children's lives and monitor their adjustment over time. If you are concerned about your child, issues should be explored further with a counselor or mental health professional.
- Use available community, school, social and religious support networks and services.