



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DURING DIFFICULT EVENTS

With guidance from the Ministry of Education & Childcare and Safer Schools Together, we are sharing below some strategies and resources to help guide conversations with children. Responses will vary depending on age, development, and connection to recent events.

The following content has been adapted from resources shared by the New Westminster School Board.

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#) | [HealthLinkBC: Helping Children with Grief](#)
[Kelty Mental Health](#) | [Learning through Loss](#) | [Foundry Virtual BC](#)

LIMIT EXPOSURE TO NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE

Limit Exposure to News and Social Media Coverage
Be mindful of how news is accessed around children and how repeated exposure may affect them. Younger children may struggle to process what they are seeing and can quickly become overwhelmed. Encourage older children to rely on reputable sources and, where possible, limit exposure to upsetting or graphic coverage.

It can also be helpful to talk about the impact that sharing images or videos may have on victims and families. Consider avoiding the viewing, reposting, or circulation of distressing content.



ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS

Children and youth often look to the adults in their lives for cues on how to respond to upsetting information. By acknowledging our own feelings in a calm and healthy way, we model how to express and process strong emotions.

It is normal for both children and adults to experience a wide range of reactions in response to difficult news.



LISTEN MORE THAN YOU SPEAK

Listen to your child's concerns before offering any explanations. Give them an opportunity to voice their fears and ask age-appropriate open-ended questions. These conversations will help you understand if your child is coming from a place of curiosity, concern or fear, and will help you gain a sense of what your child may need from adults to feel safe and supported.



PROVIDE AGE-APPROPRIATE INFORMATION

Share information honestly, but gently. Offer facts in a way that aligns with your child's age and stage of development, and keep conversations appropriate to what they are ready to understand.

Children need to know their questions and concerns are being taken seriously and that they can trust the adults in their lives to be truthful. If you don't know the answer to a question, it's okay to say so.



MAINTAIN ROUTINE

Keeping daily routines as consistent as possible can provide a sense of stability and security for both children and adults. Familiar schedules, activities, and expectations help reinforce a feeling of safety during uncertain times.

It is also important to give children permission to continue finding joy and hope in their everyday lives.



ENCOURAGE EMPATHY AND COMPASSION

Remind your child that others in their school, sport, or community may also be affected. Encourage conversations about treating one another with extra kindness, patience, and understanding during difficult times.

Moments of sadness and uncertainty can also be opportunities to model and teach compassion, helping children feel empowered to support those around them.

