

Coping with Tragedy in the News: Tips for Parents and Educators

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The severity of the news has parents and educators struggling with how to cope and, at the same time, figure out what to say to their own children.

Below is a list of resources, but please make note of the following:

- Don't leave news unattended in the house. Children absorb information like sponges, so what you may tune out as background noise, they notice. Be sure to stay with your kids when the news is on.
- Limit the amount of time the news is on. Unlimited exposure to the news' cycle repetition (especially with developing stories) amplifies the issue.
- Even the youngest children respond to the faces they see on TV. Seeing other children unhappy or crying is particularly upsetting to them.
- Children can't process where something happened — especially when the images are in their own living room. Make a point of explaining the images are coming from somewhere far away, to help your children feel safe where they are.
- Talk to your children about what's in the news. Even when you don't know what to say, ask them what they think — and, most importantly, how it makes them feel. Consider that a starting point.

Detailed information is available from a variety of sources, and it's important to compare what 'experts' have to say in order for you to find your own comfort zone:

Overviews:

A look at what not to say:

<http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/15/how-not-to-talk-with-children-about-the-sandy-hook-shooting/>

Help with what to say:

http://huntington.patch.com/blog_posts/helping-children-cope-in-tragic-times

<http://www.longislandpress.com/2012/12/14/connecticut-elementary-school-shooting-advice-for-parents/>

Resources for Parents and Educators:

* Common Sense Media: <http://www.common Sense Media.org/educators>

* Save the Children: <http://www.savethechildren.org/cope>

* American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/aftermath.aspx>

* National PTA: <http://www.pta.org/schoolviolence>

* National Association of School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org/>

