



## Talking about Terrible Things

With news and media being so easily accessible, we are constantly exposed to tragedies that occur in our world every day. For many of you, these incidents of violence may feel far away, while for others it may be much closer to home. Either way, coping with the stress of community violence, including mass shootings, can be hard, especially as it feels so pervasive.

After events such as those of the past month, many of you may be questioning your safety, looking for meaning, having difficulty focusing, and/or worrying about loved ones. **Allow yourself to feel whatever emotions arise.** You may notice yourself feeling angry, sad, fearful, worried, or even numb. Feeling numb does not mean you don't care; sometimes the body will "shut down" emotions as a way to cope in response to high frequency intense events. **Provide yourself space** to cope with these events however is best for you. This may be connecting with friends, family, community events, or general time for joy.

Talking with your children about mass-tragedy events should be done cautiously and with a lot of respect for their developmental age. If your child has already heard about a violent event in the news or nearby where you live, not talking about it can make the event feel even more threatening to them. However, providing them access to media coverage of details of the event or describing the event with lots of gruesome detail to them can also make them feel threatened and more frightened than they need to be. When talking with your child, **ask what they already know.** Gently correct any misinformation by providing them with age-appropriate explanations. **Encourage your child to ask questions and provide them answers.** Some young children will have no questions while others may be trying to understand how safe they and their family are. While no one cannot guarantee safety, you can discuss and respond to their concerns focusing on how you work to keep them safe. This will give your child the best chance to process events without being overwhelmed by them, which could lead to them exhibiting more aggression or anxiety. Remember to **limit your child's media exposure and make sure what they watch is age- appropriate.**

(Continued on page 2)

Check out the page below for [community resources](#)!

Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!



Evidence suggests that watching adult news in the wake of a mass tragedy increases kids' trauma-like responses. This also means not having children nearby, even if they don't appear to be paying attention, while you are watching media coverage. **Try to recognize and respond to your own emotions** (for example, talking with your support network or journaling) before speaking with your child, especially as your child will look at your responses for how to process the world.

After acts of violence, some children may have difficulty separating from their caregiver or become irritable and defiant. For children/teens who are feeling anxious, they may think about these events even when they don't want to. This may impact their sleep or appetite, but these reactions generally stop after a few weeks. If your child's reactions persist or begin to interfere with their functioning, you may want to reach out to a mental health professional who has expertise in trauma. Your family physician, pediatrician, or state mental health agency may have referrals.

We recognize individuals with marginalized identities (for example, people of color) are generally exposed to these kinds of tragedy far more often than others in the United States. Keep an eye out for another newsletter about community violence related to race and other identities.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES (CLICK BLUE LINKS)

### HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
- Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
  - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- [Durham County Social Services](#)
- [Orange County Social Services](#)
- [Wake County Social Services](#)

### FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Wake County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Durham County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Orange County Food Resources](#)
- [Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools](#)
- [TABLE](#)
- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [Wake County Food Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you

### HEALTH & SAFETY

- [Compass Center for Women and Families](#)
  - 919-929-7122
- [Durham Crisis Response Center](#)
  - 919-403-9425
- [InterAct Family Safety and Empowerment Center](#)
  - 919-828-7501
- [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#)
  - 866-935-4783 (call) , 919-504-5211 (text)
- [Freedom House](#)
  - 919-967-8844 (Crisis Unit, Chapel Hill)
  - 1-877-967-8844 (Mobile Service)
- [Suicide prevention lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741 741

### CHILDCARE

- [NC Hotline for Critical Workers Seeking Child Care Options](#)
- [Covid Childcare Co-op Creator](#)
- [Covid Urgent Childcare](#)
- [Child Care Services Association](#)

### LEARNING

- [Scholastics Learn at Home](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [PBS Kids](#)
- [CDC Tips for Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)

## RESOURCES RELATED TO COMMUNITY VIOLENCE (CLICK BLUE LINKS)

Caring for yourself and your little one:

- [Coping After Mass Violence: For Adults](#)
- [Talking to Children about the Shooting](#)
- [Talking to Children: When Scary Things Happen \(En Español\)](#)
- [Helping School-Age Children with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers \(En Español\)](#)
- [Helping Young Children with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers \(En Español\)](#)
- [Guiding Adults in Talking to Children about Death and Attending Services](#)
- [After a Crisis: Helping Young Children Heal](#)
- [Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#)
- [Once I Was Very Very Scared](#) – children's book for young children
- [After the Injury](#) — website for families with injured children

If you also care for a teenager, check out these resources about talking to your teen:

- [Talking to Teens about Violence \(En Español\)](#)
- [Helping Teens with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers \(En Español\)](#)
- [When Violence Happens \(Talking to Teens\) - Center for Resilience & Well-being in Schools](#)
- [For Teens: Coping After Mass Violence\(En Español\)](#)