

10 Tips for Helping Children and Youth Deal with Social or Community Crisis

The World Trade Center crisis taught us some important lessons around kids, crisis and the media. Here are some guidelines should a similar situation occur. This list was compiled by Kathie Spaun, California School Counselor and Children's Therapist

1. **Turn off the TV.** If you need to be apprised of what is happening, listen to the radio. You can't control what children may see during a live news broadcast and images that are shown can be very disturbing.
2. **Be honest.** Tell the kids what is happening. But, be sure to keep it brief and age appropriate. ("There was an airplane crash and many people are hurt.")
3. **Deal with your feelings away from the children.** By doing so, you can be a resource for them. If you need to find a friend to talk to, take a walk or journal.
4. **Do something.** Be proactive. Make a card, say a prayer, prepare a care package.
5. **Avoid stereotyping.** Do not take frustrations out on others who had nothing to do with the event.
6. **Be consistent.** Try to keep your child's schedule and routine the same as always.
7. **While still maintaining the same schedule, try to slow down.** We all need time to process significant events. Also, when you slow down you will be better able to attend to the needs of your children.
8. **Validate their emotions (and yours).** There are a range of feelings that can surface (fear, anger, sadness, confusion) none of them are right or wrong.
9. **Be aware of the ripple effect.** It may take weeks or even months for feelings/fears to surface.
10. **Above all, give children and youth a sense of hope and security for the future.**