




TALKING TO YOUTH ABOUT VIOLENCE



Don't allow the news or social media to be the message children hear.

Allow children to hear YOUR voice, YOUR compassion and YOUR empathy. Kids need to know facts, have reassurance and be reminded that they matter.

Even though you may be terrified, children need us to be grounded, validating and available.





01




**Elementary Age:
Basic information in a
developmentally
appropriate way with
reassurance of safety.**


"You might have heard about something sad happening today. What have you heard so far? What questions do you have?"

"Yes, it's very scary; but your school is safe. Mr. or Mrs. X loves teaching you and your classroom is full of good friends."

Play, drawing, talking, and sleep will all help your elementary-age child.



**Middle School Age:
Answer questions honestly
and help them balance
possibility with
probability. Identify adults
at school they can talk to.**



"This is what I know...(and insert facts). What questions do you have? What else have you heard? "


"It's important that you know that even though this type of violence is possible, it's not as common as it feels. Unfortunately, it's why we prepare for these types of disasters."

"Do you know someone at school you can talk to if you feel overwhelmed today?"

Anger, confusion, withdrawal and overwhelm are normal feelings. Help your child identify something purposeful to do.



03



**High School Age:
Emphasize empowerment,
purpose and recognizing
mental health needs of
themselves and their
peers.**

"I'm sorry that we have to talk about violence in schools. What do you need to feel heard or empowered? From me? From teachers? From our community? Let's brainstorm together."

"I want you to know you can talk to me or (identify a teacher or adult at school) about how this is effecting you. Nothing is off the table."

"This might effect your friends - if you're ever worried about their mental health, let's identify 3 people you could reach out to."

Allow your teen to spend time with friends, encourage social media breaks and be available to chat.