

helping kids cope

CATHEDRAL HOME



Pause to reflect

You're allowed to feel grieved and upset. Giving yourself room to process emotions will help promote feelings of safety and security for your child.

Ask questions + validate feelings

"Do you have any questions about what happened" and "It makes sense to be upset" can both open the door for kids to share how they're feeling.

Offer intentional time

Setting the stage for hard conversations is our job as caregivers. Kids may be timid to broach difficult topics so remind them that you're willing to revisit the conversation with them.

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ages 5-9

Start by checking in with yourself.

When adults are aware of their own emotions, children feel more secure. Because age and development determine what kids can handle, we've broken down our suggestions by age group.

For help + resources, reach out to our team at (307) 745-8997

Very aware of adult emotions and want to hear that grownups always work to keep them safe.

- avoid media and details of events
 - keep conversations separate from those with older kids
 - schools can talk in groups about ways to feel safe in general
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ages 10-12

Know more than we think. Let them lead with questions to help manage big fears.

- avoid specifics and details, especially before bedtime
 - schools can respond by offering time for individuals to ask questions/express fears
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ages 13+

Have access to a lot of information and need to hear from adults quickly.

- validate feelings, point to places they can find answers + self-advocate
- schools can initiate check-ins and encourage action-planning



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ages 5-9

Children 5-9 years old:

Young children are sensitive to the emotions of adults in their lives. They may overhear conversations or pick up on changes in the way their homes or classrooms feel. It's important to let them guide the conversation with questions. News media and specifics about the event should be avoided.

Don't be surprised to hear them share very bluntly how they feel and what they've heard. This group needs to be assured that the grownups in their lives are always working to keep them safe.

Teachers and school counselors can work together to talk with kids in groups about feelings in general, safety in general, and how students can feel safe while at school.

ages 10-12

Children 10-12 years old:

It's safe to assume that this age group will hear about current events. It's developmentally appropriate for them to be fearful, and they may find it difficult to forget scary images or topics, especially when they are exposed to them at nighttime.

Additionally, their desire for safety may lead to questions or worries about being safe at school. You can help them identify protocols and discuss what their school would do in a scary situation.

While it will be tempting to stifle conversations about uncomfortable topics, counselors and teachers can respond by finding time for individual students to ask questions and share their worries.

ages 10-12

Youth 13+

This group has quick access to information, so caregivers should address events quickly. Be open and validate their feelings of anger, fear, etc. It is common for adults to want to counter teens' fears or try to lessen the intensity of feelings, but instead, caregivers can remind kids that their feelings are real and deserve time, power, and attention.

This age group should know how the school will respond to incidents of danger, as well as what safety measures are in place to protect them. Encourage them to advocate for themselves and remind them that fears are normal, especially after an event like this.

Schools can help by offering open-door sessions for students to seek help and by initiating conversations and check-ins.

