

Having difficult Conversations



SP 1040-H

ACTIVE ADVENTURES

BE FIT TOGETHER

HEALTH BREAK

Adults often steer clear of discussing challenging subjects, whether they're about sad or troubling events. Here are some tips to help navigate those conversations.



BE PREPARED: Find out as much information as you can ahead of time. This will help you to be calm during the conversations.



LISTEN: Instead of you being the one doing all of the talking, encourage, but don't force, the children to talk. To get the conversation started, ask open-ended questions to find out what they already know or understand to know how to proceed.



STAY CALM: Children pay attention to body language and tone, not just words. It's understandable to be sad or to cry. Children need to know you are upset about what has happened, but don't let your emotions get carried away during the conversation. Reassure them it is okay to talk about it, including how it makes them feel.



BE HONEST: It's okay to tell them you do not have the answers. The extent of the conversation depends on their age and developmental level. You don't have to tell them all the details of what happened. Talk to them on their level.

Young children: Keep it simple. They need simple, concrete explanations. Use words they understand.

Older children/adolescents: Give them more information; just don't focus on the details or provide them with unnecessary ones.



LIMIT MEDIA: Limit how much exposure to media the children have. Seeing repeated coverage about the event can cause them to worry.



KEEP A ROUTINE: Follow a normal schedule as possible as you can. Keep regular meals, bedtimes, celebrations, and homework schedules.



FAMILY PREPAREDNESS PLAN: If you have a preparedness plan, go over it. If you do not have one, create a plan with your family. This will help them feel safe. If you are unsure of where to start, www.ready.gov/plan has instructions of how. You can also contact your local Extension office.

♥♥♥ *Reassure the children it is not their fault and they are safe. Let them know you are there for them.* ♥♥♥

SOURCES / ADDITIONAL READING

Centers for Disease Prevention and Control



HEALTHYCHILDREN.ORG



KIDCENTRALTN.COM

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