

Helping Children Cope with Stressful News Coverage

Over the last few days, we have seen a huge increase in disturbing news coverage, following the tragic shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Lakeland, Florida.



Here at Children's Council, we know that in times such as these, parents and caregivers often face troubling questions from little ones, who may be frightened by what they see on television or overhear in adult conversations.

Below is a blog post published this past fall, in the wake of hurricane disasters. We recommend that all parents and caregivers take the time to reflect and prepare for what may be difficult discussions around stressful news coverage.

For more guidance, here is an informative article about [talking to children about school shootings](#).

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As hurricane season peaks - bringing with it relentless and often upsetting media coverage - it's important to think about how we help our little ones deal with emotions they may not be equipped to handle on their own.

Yes, the simple answer would be “turn off the TV.” But we all know it is practically impossible to avoid media coverage and everyday adult conversations kids may overhear during times of natural disasters.

During these times, many emotions come up and we all respond to those emotions in different ways. As a parent, or a caregiver for children, those emotions can be heightened as we support our children with coping with them too. It’s important that we engage children in discussion so that they can name their emotions and feelings. Children, especially preschool-age and above, need reassurance from their caregiver, as they may naturally become fearful of something similar happening to them and/or their neighborhood.

In my own experience as a mother and early educator, I’ve found it very important to pay special attention to the needs of each child.

For example, during the recent hurricanes, while my oldest daughter would have loved to engage in deep conversations about how a hurricane is formed, my youngest would have been terrified by this same conversation.

Even if you’re not sure how your kids are reacting to what they see and hear, strive to provide reassurance to children during these times and highlight the great rescue efforts that are underway, so that they know that help is being provided.

And lastly, take care of yourself and your own emotions. When we pay attention to our own feelings and are able to express them and talk about them with other adults, we are better able to respond to our children.

To learn more, [check out this great article with a “Top 5” list of how to help children cope with disturbing news coverage.](#)

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