

# TIPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO SUPPORT YOUTH AFTER A TRAGEDY



Parents, guardians and other caring adults play an essential role in helping young people cope with tragedy. Here are tips that can help in supporting children and teens after a tragedy or scary news.

**Tell them that their homes are safe.** If you are close to the tragedy, explain what is being done in the home and community to keep them safe.

**Listen** and create a home environment that welcomes conversation. Allow young people to talk and pay attention to their questions, concerns, fears, and worries. Remember that they are processing this tragedy through a child's or adolescent's eyes and thoughts —not through an adult's perspective.

**Change the channel.** Turn off the TV and the computer when coverage dominates. Don't let children watch or hear too much about the event.

**Reassure them that while violence occurs, these tragedies are still rare events.** Young people need to know their communities and country are generally safe, and that people are generally good. They should feel confident that although these events are happening, there are many more of days where daily activities like going to school, enjoying a movie or concert, or taking a trip happen safely without a tragedy occurring.

When talking with girls, keep these messages in mind:

- Violence does occur in society, but you have caring adults who are doing everything we can to keep girls safe, like Girls Inc. staff, parents, community leaders, police, and government.
- Girls have the capacity to be strong, but it's okay to be scared. Talking about your fears does not make you weak; it leads to solutions.
- There are resources and people here to support you. There are community resources available to help you, in any way —and Girls Inc. will help you and your family find them.

Recommended Resources for Parents or Caregivers:

- [http://www.tolerance.org/search/apachesolr\\_search/traumatic%20events](http://www.tolerance.org/search/apachesolr_search/traumatic%20events)
- [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/samhsa\\_tipstalkingchildrenyouthtraumaticevents.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/samhsa_tipstalkingchildrenyouthtraumaticevents.pdf)
- <http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/terrorism>
- [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/talking\\_to\\_children\\_about\\_the\\_shooting.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/talking_to_children_about_the_shooting.pdf)
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/growing-friendships/201212/talking-children-about-disaster?collection=113345>
- <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/children-trauma-update.aspx>