

Helping Students Process Scary or Difficult News

The talking points below were created from two articles. The full articles are below.

Seek to understand the truth for yourself- If the adult has a solid understanding of the situation (good and bad), communicating with children will be easier.

Think about what you want to say- “Some advanced planning can make the discussion easier.”

Listen and clarify- “Encourage your kids to share what they already know, let them ask questions, and then offer simple, age-appropriate, clarifying information. With every news report of a scary thing, we can help them to patiently wait for all the information to come out, instead of latching onto the scary rumors that seem to fly around when such things happen.”- Eric Rasmussen, PhD.

It’s also okay to use the words ‘I don’t know’ or ‘I’m not sure’ when asked why the scary event is happening. Children can both sense and appreciate genuineness and honesty.

For parents, share your feelings with your child- Parents are role models...even with emotions.

Look for the helpers- look for those attempting to do good/the right thing in spite of the negative event. Helpers could be parents, caring counselors or others trying to help ease the scariness. Encourage children to become helpers as well in their own way.

Reassure- “Kids need to know that the adults in their lives are there to help and protect them. Reassure them that they are safe and loved – and that they can always bring their questions and worries to you and that you will work through them together.”- Eric Rasmussen, PhD

[Click Here to Read Dr. Rasmussen's Full Article](#)

[Click Here to Read the Full APA Article](#)