

From the Canadian Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response:

Supporting children and youth following a traumatic event

Parents/Guardians:

- Listen and create an environment that acknowledges all feelings. When children ask questions use age appropriate language and a calm and reassuring tone of voice. Choose what information is to be shared based on the child's age and an assessment of your child's need to know.
- Limit media exposure for younger children and for older children let them know that the media may be too upsetting for them to watch.
- With older children discuss how the media may desensitize us all to violence. As a family talk about how to best respond to sensationalized media coverage.
- Spend extra time with your children to help them feel safe and secure again. Determine which children will be most affected. For example children who have recently lost a loved one, are depressed and anxious, traumatized children and children who have been the victim of violence.
- Contact your family doctor or school administration if you are worried about your child and would like professional support to assist with your child's reaction.
- Parents should be aware that being overly protective of their children is a normal response. Emotions may include: sense of helplessness, fear, anger and a heightened sense of vulnerability. As much as possible don't allow adult emotions to negatively affect a child's sense of security.
- Reassure children that with time their feelings of vulnerability will subside but if the feelings don't subside to let you know and you will get them help.