



## **FACULTY & STAFF**

### *Responding to School Violence in Elementary Schools*

We know that children and adolescents will experience and bear witness to traumatic events, and violent acts that are replayed in the news and on social media. As faculty and staff, you play an **essential role** in responding to and supporting the students you work with when an **indirect traumatic event occurs**.

In these moments you have an opportunity to establish a **sense of safety, security, and normalcy**.

### **EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

...need **brief, simple information** that should be balanced with reassurances that their school is safe and that adults are there to protect them.

Give simple examples of school safety such as:

- \* Reminding children about exterior doors being locked
- \* Child monitoring efforts on the playground,
- \* Emergency drills practiced during the school day.



### **UPPER ELEMENTARY AND EARLY MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN**



...typically, are **more vocal in asking questions** about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school.

**They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy.** Discuss efforts of school and community leaders to provide safe schools.



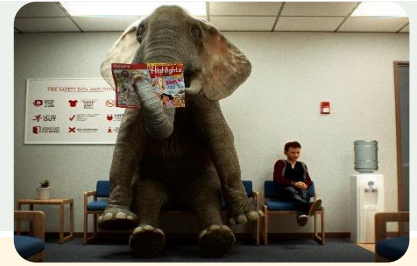
# TIPS...

## HOW TO RESPOND & TALKING POINTS

### ADDRESS THE "ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM"

...avoid **OVERSHARING**. Provide **BRIEF, SIMPLE** explanations.

- \* If students ask questions, our best answer may be to ask them, "What do you think happened?"



### CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT TO TALK



- \* **Classrooms provide a pre-established support system** to be with friends and safe adults
- \* **ALLOW SPACE** for students to ask questions and respond to each other
- \* **OBSERVE** student responses

- \* There are **NO RIGHT OR WRONG** reactions, feelings, or responses (these are normal reactions to abnormal events)
- \* Listen and avoid fixing
- \* **BE MINDFUL** of projection (not assuming your reactions are your students' reactions)
- \* **BE TRUTHFUL** (using developmentally appropriate language)
- \* **MAINTAIN ROUTINE** while allowing for modifications
- \* **CONSULT and REQUEST** support from mental health staff
- \* **COMMUNICATE** any concern to your school's mental health team.
- \* **Violence should never be used to solve personal problems.** Students' role in a positive solution can be as simple as being kind, improving conflict mediation, and seeking help from a safe adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other uncontrollable emotions.

**Emphasize that schools are safe places, and we ALL play a role in school safety.**

- \* Review different ways to report an incident or suspicious behavior
- \* There is a difference between reporting and tattling, gossip, and snitching.

### SELF-CARE/STRESS MANAGEMENT

- \* **KNOW YOUR LIMITS**
  - o Be mindful of your reactions (emotions, behaviors, thoughts, physical signs)
  - o Control media consumption
- \* **SEEK SUPPORT** from your school's mental health team when discussing difficult topics
- \* **ENGAGE** in productive activities or community service



Sources: APA Managing your distress Infographic | NASP - Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for parents and teachers.



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