

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AFTER A TRAGEDY



**LION
HEART**
CAMP FOR KIDS

HELPING CHILDREN FEEL SAFE, CONNECTED & SUPPORTED IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

When something tragic happens like a natural disaster, act of violence, or other frightening event it can shake our sense of safety. Children look to the adults around them to understand what's happening and how to feel. While we can't protect them from all pain or worry, we can offer presence, honesty, and reassurance.

TALK OPENLY

Children need simple, truthful explanations.

- Let your child know they can talk to you and that you're ready to listen.
- Many children will already know something has happened. It helps if they hear it from someone they trust.
- Use calm, clear, age-appropriate language. Focus on brief factual information about what happened rather than too much detail. For example, "There was an event where people were hurt. It's very sad and can feel scary, but you're safe and I'm here with you."
- Allow your child to lead with questions. It's okay to say "I don't know".
- Children may ask the same things repeatedly, this is normal. Answer their questions consistently.
- Share your own feelings in a calm way. This shows children that feelings are okay.

SUPPORT ALL FEELINGS

- Some children talk. Others play, draw, act out or move to show how they feel.
- Don't force conversations. Let children know they can express themselves in the way that feels right.
- Reassure them that all feelings are okay including sadness, anger, confusion or even not feeling much at all.

WHEN TO SEEK MORE HELP

Some children may need extra support especially if they've experienced earlier trauma or are more directly affected by the tragic event. If your child is having ongoing trouble sleeping, eating, managing big feelings, behaving differently, or avoiding school or separation, speak with your GP, school staff or a child psychologist. Remember, you are not alone, and neither is your child.

REASSURE THEM & HELP THEM FEEL SAFE

- A tragedy can shake a child's sense of safety. Let them know you, and other trusted adults, are there to keep them safe.
- Help them name people they trust who can help if they're scared.
- Emphasise that events like these are rare, and remind them of the many things adults and communities do to stay safe.
- Keep daily routines going

LIMIT NEWS & MEDIA EXPOSURE

- Graphic news stories or repeated images can increase fear or confusion especially in younger children who may believe the event is happening again and again.
- Turn off the news and redirect conversations when needed.
- Spend time together doing something soothing, for example, puzzles, baking, or time outside can calm and ground children.

STAY CONNECTED

- You don't have to do this alone. Speak with teachers, school counsellors, and mental health professionals.
- Let your child's school know what's happened and what your child needs.