



In the wake of tragedy, a crisis, or ongoing conflict (like the one in Israel), parents and caregivers can help children manage complicated emotions and reactions to their experiences.

As individuals we all have unique reactions to viewing overwhelming images on social media or experiencing traumatic events. As caregivers, we can help our children understand what might be supportive in times fear, anger, sorrow, and grief. Below are some helpful suggestions to support your child through these stressful times:

- **Talk** – Do not underestimate the importance of engaging in conversations about experiences – adults can start the conversations. Ask your child what they think and how are they feeling about what they are seeing on social media or what they are hearing from family/peers.
- **Practice active listening** – Plan to be present with no distractions and allow for free expression – try to not interrupt, pass judgement, or interpretations, you can consider softly offering thoughts about misconceptions or misinformation.
- **Identify and reinforce safe space** – You can name this, and acknowledge environments of safety and support – people and places that are free from harm.
- **Be ready** – Children and adults may find it more comfortable to talk and express themselves when not in a formal conversation exchange – parallel activities might offer open times and comfort for sharing feelings and thoughts.
- **Model self-care and self-compassion** – By taking care of yourself you can help others and teach positive coping – name your intentions behind behaviors and share your experiences. Express curiosity and interest in what your child is thinking and feeling. While this might be hard at times, your genuine interest in your child’s thoughts and feelings will be heard and reciprocated as they work through these overwhelming events.
- **Be aware of ‘adult’ issues** – Be thoughtful in where and when heavy topics are being discussed and addressed – take breaks from the media and encourage peaceful environments.
- **Monitor for stress symptoms** – Observe any changes in child’s behaviors or emotional engagement, specifically any changes in daily living routines (eating, sleeping, etc.).
- **Check-in** – Make it a point to ‘check-in’ and learn about the experiences of family members.

Please seek help and communicate with supportive systems of care if needed. Remember you are not alone in managing complicated responses to events. We may all experience them differently, but we can also be part of the fabric of healing and support. Call JCFS Chicago at 855.275.5237 or email [Ask@JCFS.org](mailto:Ask@JCFS.org) to learn more about our many programs and services and the ways we can help.