



Boys Town releases tips for parenting in the aftermath of a school shooting

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ORLANDO, Fla.—Today’s world can be a scary place for everyone, especially kids. With stories about school shootings, hurricanes, and accidents running on the news sites continuously, it’s impossible to shield kids from the realities of life. However, we can help them cope with the events and continue to move forward using a variety of strategies and tools.

“Parents are a child's greatest asset following a school shooting. The child will look to them as a litmus of safety and for guidance. Indeed, it is normal for youth to go through an adjustment period following an event that produced substantial fear and safety concerns,” said Boys Town psychologist Dr. Jason Gallant. “It is important for parents to emphasize that it is okay to have these feelings, provide a safe and inviting environment for child expression, and, most importantly, serve as a model for how to cope, recover, and move on.”

Here are some tips for helping your kids in the aftermath of a tragedy like a school shooting:

1. Keep things on a need to know basis; avoid including too many details when discussing traumatic events.
2. Always be available and listen to your child when they want to talk, but don’t force children to talk about their feelings. Parents, friends and teachers can all be great sources of support, caring and understanding for kids.
3. Parents should manage their own responses to tragedy. They should convey confidence in the future. If parents are anxious, children will pick up on those cues.
4. Getting kids back to their normal activities and their regular schedule as soon as possible promotes positive coping and healing. Routines are comforting to kids.
5. Encourage children to stay positive and work together to identify the strength and good in the community.

6. Monitor kids and stay vigilant as the healing process continues, even months after the event. If you notice a change in eating or sleeping habits two weeks or longer after the event, you should seek professional help from a licensed mental health professional.

The [Boys Town National Hotline](#), 1-800-448-3000, can provide additional support for kids and parents in the aftermath of a school shooting. The crisis guide on [Boystown.org](#) is also a helpful resource for parents navigating this tumultuous time.

About Boys Town

For 100 years, Boys Town has been a beacon of hope for America's children and families through its life-changing youth care and health care programs. In 2016, almost 500,000 children and families across the United States were impacted by Boys Town programs. This includes those who received services from Boys Town's residential programs as well as those served by the many varied programs that comprise the Boys Town Integrated Continuum of Child and Family Services, including In-Home Family Services, health care services provided by Boys Town National Research Hospital and the Boys Town National Hotline. You can find more information about Boys Town online at www.Boystown.org.

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