**Useful Info for Parents about Media Coverage – Catastrophic Events**

If parents allow young children to watch the news, experts suggest that parents watch the news WITH their children and talk about what they are seeing. For example, if parents allowed their children to watch coverage of any natural disasters or terrorist attacks, children may have needed it explained to them that despite seeing the disturbing images over and over again, this was a single incident on one day or in a period of time. Also, parents can help their children put the news into context by explaining that there are many good people who will do their best to keep them safe if something bad happens (focus on the firefighters and rescue teams). Children need to be reminded that what they see on the news happens in certain places, but not everywhere. And they should learn how to cherish what they have and care about other people in need, and aim to make this world a better place.

Most importantly, parents need to allow and encourage children to ask questions. Children may have irrational fears after watching a news report because they misunderstand something. If they share those fears or ask clarifying questions, parents can help alleviate their anxiety. Parents can tell the child that a lot of people are working hard to make the situation safer for the future. If a child seems to be watching too much news coverage of a traumatic event, the parent can redirect the child's attention to other more positive activities.

Most children and teenagers will recover from their fear. If, after a month, a child is still showing signs of distress, professional help may be indicated. Signs of distress include not sleeping or eating; excessive clinging; re-experiencing the event through nightmares, recollections or play; emotional numbing; or persistent fears about disaster. If a child or adolescent is experiencing these symptoms, seek the assistance of a school counselor, other trusted academic official or mental health professional about your concerns.

[http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/media-coverage-traumatic-events.asp](http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/media-coverage-traumatic-events.asp" \t "_blank)

[http://www.healthyplace.com/anxiety-panic/main/coping-with-trauma/menu-id-69/](http://www.healthyplace.com/anxiety-panic/main/coping-with-trauma/menu-id-69/" \t "_blank)

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