

# PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ARE HEROES: PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN IN A CRISIS



## 1. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF SO YOU CAN SUPPORT CHILDREN

- When the stress is too much, take a moment for yourself.
- Listen to your breath as it goes in and out.
- You can put a hand on your stomach and feel it rise and fall with each breath.
- Then just listen to your breath for a while.

**Try this every day. You are amazing.**

## 3. PRACTICAL WAYS TO HELP US COPE

- Even when it feels hard, try to have some daily routines for yourself.
- Routines help children feel safe. If you can, do daily routines like meals or playtime and bedtime .
- Helping someone else can make you feel better, too. Our children learn calm and kindness from us.

**Our children learn calm and kindness from us.**

## 5. COPING WITH STRESS UPSET AND ANGER

- Find someone who you can talk to about how you are feeling.
- Losing your temper? Give yourself a 10-second pause.
- Breathe in and out slowly five times. Then try to respond in a calmer way.

**Be proud of yourself every time you try this.**

## 7. BUILDING CHILDREN'S STRENGTH IN A CRISIS

- Ask children to help with family tasks.
- Praise children for trying or doing well.
- This will help them do good things again.
- Tell children that staying together will help keep them safe.

**Praising children shows them that you notice and care.**

## 2. HELP CHILDREN COPE WITH CRISIS

- Children may be scared, confused and angry. They need your support.
- Answer your children's questions honestly in words they can understand
- Listen to children when they share how they are feeling
- Accept how they feel and give them comfort

**Every evening, praise children and yourself for something.**

## 4. 5 MINUTES OF POSITIVE TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN

- Ask children what they would like to do.
- Listen to them, look at them.
- Give them your full attention.

**Playing with and talking to children every day helps them feel secure.**

## 6. CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR OUR CHILDREN

- Agree together on a designated place or shelter to hide in during times of intense fighting.
- At home, adopt a low position as much as possible and stay away from exterior walls and windows, especially when fighting gets worse.
- Do not open the door for anyone, unless you are certain that it is safe to do so.
- Move to safer areas far from fighting if you can.





8. KEEPING OUR FAMILIES TOGETHER

- Keep children with you or someone you trust all the time.
- In case of evacuation, carry your child or hold their hand, and have them walk in front of you.
- Stay in the same vehicle with them at all times.

**You may well feel exhausted and overwhelmed.  
Be proud of yourself for keeping going.**

10. MAKING SAFETY PLANS WITH OUR CHILDREN

- Make a song or chant with your child so they memorize your full name and phone number, and number of someone you trust. Go over it every day.
- Make plans with children about practical ways to keep safe.
- Make a plan together for what to do if you are separated.
- Try to keep children with parents, family or friends you trust.
- Make copies or photos of all your identity documents.

**Recognise you are doing the best you can in a crisis.**

9. SAFETY NOTES FOR EVERY CHILD

- A safety note is covered in plastic, or kept in a waterproof bag.
- Write the full name & phone number of you and three people you trust.
- Write any medication your child needs, any special needs or disability.
- Hide a safety note on every child (e.g. in a pocket that they always wear, on a necklace or in their shoe)

**By being prepared, you are giving your child the best possible chance of staying safe. You are doing all you can.**

11. TRAVELLING SAFELY WITH OUR CHILDREN

- Travel in a group of people you know.
- Keep someone you trust updated with your travel plans, where you are and who you are with.
- Make a code word with people you trust, to let them know if you are in danger.
- Don't give your passport or ID documents to anyone.
- Don't trust your children to be taken care of by a stranger.

**Everything you do is protecting your children.  
You are doing your best.**

13. TELLING OUR CHILDREN WHEN SOMEONE WE LOVE DIES

- In simple words, tell them the person has died and will not come back.
- Listen to and accept whatever your child feels. Children may seem happy but be sad.
- Let them know it's ok, however they feel.
- It's ok not to have all the answers. Just listening will help children know that you care.

**You must be hurting too. Take a moment to breathe.**

12. PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE

- Teach your child that nobody has the right to touch them.
- Practice saying and shouting "no".
- Talk to them about dangerous places and people.
- If abuse happens, believe your child. Tell them it is not their fault and that you love them.

**We know it's hard, but talking with your child helps protect them. You are doing your best for them.**

14. HELPING CHILDREN COPE WHEN SOMEONE WE LOVE DIES

- Do something together to say goodbye to the person – a prayer, letter or song..
- Clearly tell children who will be looking after them from now on.
- However they react, don't take it personally. Just be there to love and support them.
- Make sure they don't blame themselves for anything that has happened.

**Allow yourself and your children to mourn any losses.  
Remember, you are doing your best.**

