

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.

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.

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.

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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.

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.

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.





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.

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.

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.

