



Supporting Your Child After a Tragic Event

This is a very sad time for our PVNC Catholic community. Here is some information that may be helpful in assisting you and your child to manage during this difficult time. Young people respond to difficult situations in unique ways, and a wide range of reactions are possible. Your child's response will be influenced by their personality, relationship with those impacted, what is happening in their life and their ability to adjust to change. Parental understanding, reassurance and attention are very important at this time. Be guided by your child's need to talk and make it clear to them that you will be available whenever they need you.

Young people who have experienced other stressful situations in their lives (e.g., the separation/divorce of parents, the death of a relative/pet, moving to a new house/school) may find it harder to cope. It is expected that many children and families will be experiencing strong reactions, especially given the unique challenges that families are currently facing related to COVID-19. Your child may become upset and need to express their feelings about these other concerns, even if they had appeared to be coping. Your child may have a lot of questions and should be encouraged to talk to a trusted adult. Adolescents often share their feelings about tragic events with friends in conversations, e-mails, text messages and through social media. Young people should encourage help-seeking in any friends they have concerns about. An important message to share with your child is to tell an adult if they're worried about a friend.

Should your child need support, we encourage you to share the contact information for Kids Help Phone with them. (1-800-668-6868; kidshelphone.ca; text CONNECT to 686868). They are able to provide support by phone, text or online chat. If you're worried about the immediate safety of your child, Four County Crisis can be accessed by calling 705-745-6484 or toll-free 1-866-995-9933.

At home, you can support your child by:

- Following their lead and answering their questions in a way that is appropriate for their age.
- Expecting a range of emotions in your child and yourself (like grief, sadness, anxiety, anger).
- Giving yourself and your child a little grace. When we're experiencing strong emotions, it can be tricky to stay on top of everything and to manage our behaviour.
- Maintaining the typical routine and boundaries, as much as possible.
- Taking some time to do activities that are fun and that are relaxing. Self-care is important for our children and for ourselves.
- Spending time with family and friends.
- Seeking support at school, in the community, and church.