

May 26, 2022

Dear Whitefish Bay School Community,

Our hearts and thoughts are with the residents of Uvalde, Texas as they grieve and recover from recent tragic events. The Pupil Services Department of Whitefish Bay School District wants to provide you with resources and information to help you and your family at this extremely emotional and difficult time. As a parent or guardian, you are in an important position to help your child cope after a disaster, crisis or emergency, such as the one that happened in Texas.

Our shared goal is to respond in a manner that helps children cope with traumatic events and does not cause further trauma or undue distress. To foster appropriate emotional health, it is important that we find a response that is a good fit for your child to better understand and move forward. It is extremely important to reaffirm a sense of safety for our children while providing emotional support. Here are some specific recommendations as referenced in [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#) from the National Association of School Psychologists:

- **Limit Media And Social Media Exposure.** After mass violence, media and social media coverage is constant. You may be tempted to stay tuned to media coverage, but this can cause even more distress.
- **Stick To Normal Routines and Structure.** This is comforting for children.
- **Connect with Others.** Find ways to connect with your family, friends, and other people who make you feel more relaxed. Children benefit from the social support that they receive when with peers, too.
- **Monitor your Own Reaction.** Acute distress by adults after a tragedy may make children feel less safe.
- **Employ Basic Psychological First Aid.** Listen to your children, connect with them, answer their questions and let them know that they are not alone in their feelings and reactions to the trauma.
- **Emphasize That Your Child Is Safe Now.** Mass violence is shocking and can make you fear for your safety. Fear and not feeling safe are common reactions after mass violence. Knowing what is being done to enhance security can reduce these reactions.
- **Do Not Force Discussion About This Topic.** If a discussion does occur, let children speak about their feelings and validate all reactions to the event. Do not dwell on the upsetting nature of this event. Answer questions simply and directly. It is fine to say “I don’t know”.
- **Focus On Coping.** Talk about what helps each of us get through hard times. This acknowledges what has occurred while providing hope, and sets resiliency as the norm. Choosing a calming or mindfulness activity can be helpful in calming.

If additional support is needed, please reach out to your school principal, school counselor, or school psychologist directly for further communication and collaboration.

The following information and links are also available for your reference and support:

- [Helping your children manage distress in the aftermath of a shooting](#) - American Psychological Association
- [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#) - NASP
- [NCTSN Resources](#) - The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- [Talking to Your Children about Tragedies and Other News Events](#) - Healthy Children
- [Anxiety Over School Shootings](#) - Child Mind
- [Resources to help children in the wake of a school shooting](#) - Child Trends
- [How to Talk to Kids About Tragedy in the Media](#), Child Development Institute - Child Development Institute
- [Talking to Kids About Fear & Violence](#) - Mental Health America
- [Tips for Survivors - Coping with Grief After Community Violence](#) - SAMHSA
- [Talking to Kids About Fear & Violence](#) - Mental Health America
- The Disaster Distress Helpline offers immediate crisis counseling to people affected by tragedy: Call 1-800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746.

Sincerely,

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