

Navigating Difficult Conversations

Our Kansas City community has experienced a tremendously difficult event, which has left all of us with questions and concerns on how to move forward. When tragedy hits, the one thing that unifies all of our perspectives and experiences is our deep discomfort in what has occurred, and our desperate desire to protect our children now and in the future.

Focus on providing safety & connection.

You don't have to have the perfect answers. All that your child needs right now is to feel safe in their ability to ask you any questions that they have about what they have seen, heard, and felt.

- We are all functioning in “fight or flight” mode right now. What a person needs when they are functioning in fight or flight mode is **safety & connection**.
 - “I’m here for you for any questions that you have.”
 - “Gosh, that’s such a tough question. That makes me feel a little uncomfortable. I bet you might feel uncomfortable having those thoughts too, huh? Tell me more about that.”
 - “My number one job as your _____ is to keep you safe. You can count on me to do everything that I can to keep you safe.”
- When we spend extended periods of time functioning in “fight or flight” mode, our mental and emotional capacities diminish.
 - Expect for your kids to have limited to no mental or emotional capacities to use logical reasoning after school.
 - Lower expectations. Do something to show them they are loved.
 - Allow space for them to ask questions, but accept their limited communication as a sign of mental and emotional overwhelm.
 - **This trauma doesn’t end today.** Each child will process in their own way, on their own timeline.
 - Create space for questions, safety, and connection tonight and in the coming days and weeks.
 - Recognize your own mental and emotional capacity. Take care of yourself and do something to regulate yourself. We can’t regulate our kiddos if we aren’t regulated ourselves.
- **You are most equipped** to give your child what they need the most right now. **Only you** know how to tailor that love and connection for your unique child and their unique experience of the tragedy.
- If you’re confident in nothing else, be **confident in your ability to unconditionally love your child** and be their person.