

Talking with Children about Traumatic News or Events

Article taken from NYU Child Study Center

http://www.aboutourkids.org/articles/talking_children_about_difficult_subjects_illness_death_violence_disaster

Don't avoid the subject

Parents may think they are protecting children by steering clear of potentially upsetting subjects. But children are often exposed to more than parents are aware, and a child's fears can grow out of proportion if there is no opportunity to address them. You may reinforce some of those fears inadvertently, especially if your child asks you directly about a topic and you avoid it. Children may

actually be generating more worry and fear. If you feel the need, do prepare yourself by talking through your own feelings first with someone you trust. The purpose of talking about these types of events is to convey to the child that the parent is available to help make sense of the experience available to self

gets a runny nose. It may help to explain death as the absence of life - that when people die, they don't talk, eat, sleep, breathe, think or feel anymore. Dead flowers don't bloom and grow. A dead bird doesn't fly or sing.

Be aware of time and place

Although it is important to respond to questions when they arise, parents and school professionals are encouraged to have a discussion with children without distractions. The child should be given time and attention to discuss their perceptions, understanding, fears, worries and concerns. For example, if the topic comes up in the supermarket, tell your child that you're glad that the conversation arose and you'll go home and discuss it over ice cream. Similarly, if a child brings up the topic in a classroom setting not conducive to the discussion, school professionals are encouraged to discuss the matter in