

AS YOU ENTER OUR CAMPUS, PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Media Coverage of Tragic Events Affecting Our School Age Youth

Circumspection and care are critical for the responsible media coverage of the impact of tragic events or their anniversary. Children are less able than adults to understand their emotional and psychological reactions to current events. This is particularly true for children who are personally connected to or affected by a loss. While the media plays an essential educational and informational role, it can also cause real harm to children and vulnerable populations if its focus magnifies painful, disturbing details, people's loss and suffering, or the possibility of future or ongoing threats. Where possible, interviews and media coverage should focus on the healing process that is taking place.

Dangers of Intrusive or Excessive Coverage

- Intensive, detailed coverage of the event can raise children's anxiety levels. Troubled youth and those directly impacted by the event may internalize the information and be at renewed risk of severe trauma reactions, such as problems at home or school, extreme anger, aggression, depression, suicide, substance abuse, or the impulse to harm others.
- Forcing children or youth to comment on their loss or re-live their experience can cause serious psychological setbacks. Children are particularly vulnerable and may assume an enormous sense of guilt if they feel that they have said or done something inadequate during a media interview.
- Excessive or intrusive media coverage can impede the ability of individual students and the school community to move forward with the healing process. Inappropriate coverage of memorial activities can undermine the purpose or healing value of the activity.
- Focusing on the fear and trauma caused by an event can perpetuate the misperception that children are not coping.

Considerations for Ethical, Responsible Coverage

- Be aware of the potentially still-fragile state of individuals who were near or lost a loved-one in the attacks.
- Understand the range of potential reactions that can be caused by a traumatic event or the anniversary of an event.
- Avoid over dramatizing the impact of the event on children and youth. Report how they are coping factually.
- Identify and provide information regarding where to access resources on coping with trauma and who to contact if someone is having difficulty.

(excerpted from: http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/index.aspx)

THANK YOU.