

## Model and teach desired behaviors.

We know that adult actions and attitudes influence children. Adults can help children and youth manage their reactions to events in the news and their communities by understanding their children's feelings, modeling healthy coping strategies, and closely monitoring their own emotional states and that of those in their care. Identifying and redirecting negative thoughts and feelings can help teach children social-emotional skills and problem-solving.

## Reassure children that they are and will be okay.

Remember to reinforce strategies to ensure both physical and psychological safety. Remind adults and students of the importance of supporting each other during difficult times and acknowledge people will have a variety of emotions. If students feel physically or psychologically unsafe, they need to know how to report incidents and trust that adults will be there to validate and respond to their concerns.

## Help children manage strong emotions.

For many children, the intense discussions, media images, and messages that they may have been exposed to could trigger a range of strong emotions. Some children may experience anger or stress. Others may feel a sense of excitement and hope. Children's emotions often spill over into schools. Help children understand the range of emotions they are feeling and encourage them to learn to express them in appropriate and respectful ways. For children experiencing stress, we can help by spending time with them, encouraging them to talk about their feelings, maintaining a sense of normalcy in their schedules and activities, and providing coping strategies.



## Reinforce acceptance and appreciation for diversity.

Acknowledge that everyone is entitled to their personal opinions but hateful or intolerant comments about others' cultures, sexual orientations, religions, or races—or any other comments that are meant to hurt or make another feel threatened, unsafe, or unwelcome—will not be tolerated.

## Stop any type of harassment or bullying immediately.

Make it clear that such behavior is unacceptable. Talk to the children involved about the reasons for their behaviors. Offer alternative methods of expressing their anger, confusion, or insecurity, and provide supports for those who are subject to bullying.

## Help children see other perspectives and value respectful dialogue.

Sharing our different points of view and working to find common ground, shared goals, and mutual understanding are good ways to draw strength from our diversity. The very nature of civil disagreement is to acknowledge, respectfully, the views and experiences of other people and learn from differing perspectives. Adults can start by reflecting on their own experiences and consider how these experiences shape their interactions and reactions. They can help children



to this also and ask questions of each other instead of hurling accusations. Adults can create safe spaces for youth to share their feelings and concerns while also exploring how they might feel and act if they were in a similar situation. Help students see how words matter and how we use them matters. Teach them to avoid stigmatizing statements and to state their thoughts with opening phrases like, "I believe" or "Have you thought about" instead of "Anybody who" or "No one should."

## Encourage children to channel their views and feelings into positive action.

We are all part of the online community and can make positive contributions. Like adults, children and youth are empowered by the ability to do the right thing and help others. Working with friends, family, classmates, or members of the community who come from different backgrounds enables children to feel they are making a positive contribution and reinforces their sense of commonality with diverse people.

Adapted from: <https://www.nasponline.org/about-school-psychology/media-room/press-releases/>