

TALKING TO YOUR YOUNG CHILDREN ABOUT RECENT EVENTS IN BALTIMORE

Young children's reactions to the events will be strongly influenced by the reactions of their parents, teachers, and other close adults. There are several ways that you can help them cope:

Expect that your child's behavior may not be normal – you may observe these behaviors more than usual. In response, give your child extra love and patience – this will help them get back to normal sooner.

- *crying
- *whining
- *bedwetting
- *thumb-sucking
- *clinging to caregivers
- *stomach aches
- *quietness or spacing out
- *eating problems
- *sleeping problems, bad dreams, fear of the dark
- *tantrums or “acting up”

Talk to your child about what happened in their community:

1. Ask your children what they know about what happened and encourage them to ask you about it.
2. Answer their questions honestly, but also simply. Do not give too much more upsetting information.
3. Gently correct information that is not accurate.
4. Limit your child's exposure to TV, radio, and internet coverage.

Reassure your child that you will keep him/her as safe as possible:

For example, remind him/her that your doors are locked. Help your child identify at least one adult at home and in the community that he/she could go to if they do not feel safe.

Maintain a normal routine:

Try to keep your child on a regular schedule. This will soothe their nerves and help them stay healthy.

Take care of yourself:

1. Do your best to drink plenty of water, eat regular meals, sleep, and exercise.
2. Put off big decisions.
3. Take time with other adult relatives, friends, and community members to support each other.

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TALKING TO YOUR TEENS ABOUT RECENT EVENTS IN BALTIMORE

Teenagers' reactions to the events will be strongly influenced by the reactions of their parents, teachers, and other close adults. There are several ways that you can help them cope.

Expect that your teenager's behavior may not be normal – you may observe these behaviors:

- *anxiety or nerves
- *sadness, grief, withdrawal
- *irritability
- *inability to concentrate
- *eating problems
- *sleeping problems, nightmares
- *stomach aches, other ache and pains
- *increased sensitivity to sounds such as loud noises or screaming
- *staying focused on the events (for example, talking constantly about Freddie Gray)
- *engaging in harmful habits like drinking, using drugs, or harming him/herself or others

Talk to your teen about what happened in their community:

5. Encourage your teen to ask you questions and answer them honestly.
6. Gently correct information that is not accurate.

Maintain your routines and rules:

Stick with your usual routines and rules for your teen. Monitor them more closely than usual for now – explain that it is for their safety.

Respond to acting-up, offer alternatives:

1. Be patient. Explain to your teen that “acting up” behaviors are dangerous ways to express strong feelings. You can say something like, “Many people feel angry and out of control right now. But we need to find healthy ways to express ourselves and to help.”
2. Some things that you can do *with your teen*: read a poem, exercise, write a journal or diary entry together, pray together, or make time for silent reflection.
3. Be a positive role model. Model the behaviors you want your teen to use. Draw your teen's attention to positive actions and helping behaviors in the community.
4. Encourage your teen to take good care of him/herself - drink water, eat regular meals, sleep, exercise, and limit exposure to media coverage.

Take care of yourself:

1. Do your best to drink plenty of water, eat regular meals, sleep, and exercise.
2. Put off big decisions.
3. Take time with other adult relatives, friends, and community members to support each other.