

## School Violence: Coping with Anxiety

We know that children can be some of the youngest victims of violence. An example is the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Violent events may cause your child to be afraid to go to school. Here are a few ways to cope with a child's reaction to this event.

### How to Deal With Fear and Anxiety

- Fear is a normal reaction to any danger that threatens life or well-being.
- A child may be afraid of the event happening again. He or she may also be afraid of being separated from family or being left alone.
- Recognize that your child is scared.
- As a parent it is important to understand the types of fear that children face.

### Advice to Parents

- Keep the family together.
- Provide comfort for your child with your actions and words.
- Talk to your child about his or her fears. Listen closely to what they say.
- Do not avoid talking about the event. You should discuss what happened and answer any questions that a child might have.

### Settling Down

- Parents should show the child that they are in control. Be understanding. But also be firm and supportive. Make decisions for children when they are needed.
- It is normal for a child to want to be close to their parents. It is also normal for the parents to want to protect their child.
- Parents should be aware of their own fears and uncertainties. This can impact the child.
- Do not focus on any immature behavior that a child might be showing.

### How Do Parents Know When to Get Professional Help?

It is time to get help if:

- Children develop problems with sleeping for more than a few weeks.
- The clinging behavior does not go away.
- Fear gets worse.

### Help Is Available

Call us using the phone number in your member handbook for more information, help and support. We are here to help you get and stay well.