Our children are particularly vulnerable to fear in the wake of violence. They have a harder time understanding what's happening and putting it into perspective. We need to pay special attention to their needs.

Here are some tips.

- **Be available.** Make time to talk. Be sure they know they can come to you when they have questions. Listen to their concerns, and then reassure them. For example, point out that these events are limited and the risk to any particular individual is very low. Communicate that you will always do your best to keep them safe.

- **Be honest.** Give them information that is truthful and appropriate for age and maturity level. Talk to them about how some stories on the internet and social media may be inaccurate or based on rumors.

- **Be calm.** Children will react to both what you say and how you say it. Even if you're feeling tense, try to speak with them as calmly as possible. This will set the tone for ongoing conversations.

- **Share stories** about volunteers, heroes, and public servants. This may help to counteract some of the negative events.

- **Maintain family routines.** Particularly around meals, bedtimes, and scheduled social and leisure activities. Structure helps a child feel safe. Make time for soothing activities such as reading with them or playing board games.

- **Be especially patient** with your children, your family, and other loved ones. Give them signs of reassurance such as hugs and affection. Also be patient with yourself and understanding your own needs.

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