

# Troubling Times

## Answering Kids' Questions About Community Violence

These are hard days. Our world is full of scary and disturbing news about people harming others. It's tough to know how to explain these events to young children, or how much information to share.

Community violence is violence that happens *around you*. It can happen in your own neighborhood, but because of media, it can be just as upsetting to watch it happening in other states or far across the world.

After such an event, pay close attention to what kids are saying and listen to exactly what they're asking. Avoid exposing them to media or conversations related to what happened, particularly if they don't know what happened. Children's questions are key to know best how to engage in conversation and how much information to share. Some common questions and possible answers are:

### What happened?

- *A sad thing happened in \_\_\_\_\_. A person hurt other people. The police found the person so they could not keep hurting others.*
- *A lot of people are very upset, but a lot of helpers are there with them.*

### Why did these people do this bad thing?

- *That's a good question. There is no good reason to harm other people.*
- *We don't completely understand why.*
- *These people have not learned to be kind to others.*

### Will the bad people come hurt us?

- *I know how to keep you and our family safe, and everyone around us is working hard to make sure we stay safe.*

If the event happened far away, use the distance to reassure.

Depending on kids' ages, you might show the location on a globe or map.

### Will this happen again?

- *It is very rare for this to happen. It does not happen very much.*
- *It's over now.*

### And it's okay to say...

- *I'm not sure of the answer to that question. Let me think about it.*
- *I wish there was a good answer to that question, but we just don't know.*
- *I'm sad/angry, too. We all feel sad/angry.*

