

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Dear Parent or Caring Adult,

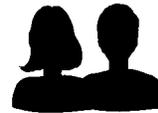
In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, many parents expressed concerns about how these events might affect their children. Common questions were: “What should I tell my child?” “How can I tell if these events are bothering my child?” “What can I do to help my child cope with this disaster?” This book is designed to help parents address these questions and issues.

Children and adults’ reactions to the terrorist attacks will vary, depending in part on how close they were to the events and how much they were directly affected. Because of this, some parents and children may be more interested in the materials in this book than others. We suggest you read the book first before choosing which topics and activities to do with your child. In addition, please evaluate your own stress level before beginning work on this book. If you feel you are having difficulty with stress, talk to another adult before working on this book with your child.

The book contains activities that parents and caring adults can do together with their children. The activities are appropriate for children ages 6 to 12 years, but may be adapted for older children as well. We encourage you to adjust the activities and their pace to your child. Younger children (ages 6 to 8) may need extra help from a parent, and may prefer to complete some activities by drawing rather than by writing. Younger or active children may also prefer working on one topic at a time; others may be able to complete two or more topics in one sitting. Keep in mind that some children prefer to seek out more information than others.

There are 12 Topics covered in this book. For each topic, there is a “Parent Page” on the left and a “Child Page” on the right. Some of the Parent Pages have “Joint Activities” at the bottom for parents and children to complete together.

➤ Each Parent Page has instructions and activities for parents -



➤ Each Child Page contains a parallel activity for the child -



The sections of this book have been put together in a suggested sequence. However, feel free to “skip ahead” to those that may be especially useful for your child. For example, the “Fears and Worries” topic, and the material on pages 34-35 may be of special interest. There are four sections in this book. The first section, Topics 1-4, has activities that may help you “ease into” using the book. The second section, Topics 5-8, covers coping skills that should be helpful for most children. The third section, Topics 9-12, focuses on coping skills to help children with specific situations. The fourth section contains common Questions and Answers and useful information and resources.

Find a quiet time to complete the activities with your child. Explain to your child that the activities in this book are informative and fun and will help them cope with any bad feelings that they are having as a result of the terrorist attacks.

With our best wishes to all Fire Department families,

Annette La Greca

Elaine Sevin

Scott Sevin



A DAY WE WILL REMEMBER – The Facts

Children understand events based on their own experiences, which are more limited than adults’ experiences. Before September 11, 2001, many children, especially young children, may not have heard the word “terrorist” or understood what this meant. Some might not have understood why adults were so upset by the events of September 11, or why there was continuous television coverage of the event.

What children did understand, however, was that something was very wrong. Many schools closed, and children were sent home in the middle of the school day. Their teachers, family and friends were visibly upset, scared or in shock; many were crying. Even if family members were “okay,” children may have seen others who were upset and scared on television or in their neighborhood.



Parent Activity: Check Your Child’s Knowledge of the Facts

One way to help a child cope with the events of September 11 – and to prevent any misunderstandings – is to review the facts with your child. Talk about the terrorist attacks and make sure your child understands the main facts and events that occurred. This will open up an opportunity for discussion on many related subjects.

JOINT ACTIVITY: Relevant Topics

Below is a list of “keywords” that you and your child can discuss. Keep in mind that some children may not want to discuss every “keyword.” This is okay. You can read these terms to your child and have them choose which “keywords” they would like to discuss or know more about. If needed, look up information on the Internet, at your local library or school library.

The Taliban
Afghanistan
Terrorist
Osama Bin Laden
Al Qaeda
Chemical Weapon
Nuclear Weapon
Biological Weapon
Anthrax
Islam
Muslim
Immigration Visa
Washington DC
New York City

The Pentagon
World Trade Center
Ground Zero
Police Department
Fire Department
Bunker Gear
Protective Mask
Asbestos
EPA
FBI
CIA
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Customs Service
CDC

Democracy
President George W. Bush
Vice President Dick Cheney
Colin Powell, Secretary of State
Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
John Ashcroft, U.S. Attorney General
Tom Ridge, Homeland Security
Rudolph W. Giuliani
Governor George E. Pataki
United Nations (UN)
NATO
Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines
Special Operations Forces (SOF)
Operation Enduring Freedom



A DAY WE WILL REMEMBER – The Facts



It is important to remember what happened on September 11, 2001. Terrorists hijacked (took over) four airplanes. Two planes were flown into the World Trade Center in New York and another was flown into the Pentagon in Washington DC. Passengers on the fourth plane stopped another terrorist attack from happening when their plane crashed in Pennsylvania.

Although many people were killed on September 11, thousands were saved thanks to the rescuers that came to help. Heroes such as firefighters, police, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, doctors and brave citizens saved many lives.

1. You can show your appreciation to the heroes of September 11 by drawing or writing a tribute below. Use another sheet of paper if you need more room.

2. Draw or write a thank you to the people who continue to help save lives each and every day.



A DAY WE WILL REMEMBER – Where Were You?

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were a “defining moment” in American history – just like the attack on Pearl Harbor or the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Our country and our lives will be forever changed by these events. Decades later, many who were alive at the time of President Kennedy’s assassination can remember where they were and what they were doing the moment they heard the news.

For children, however, the significance of such an event may not be immediately understood and may not leave a lasting impression. It is important for them to remember the events of September 11 and their own personal experiences. The following activities will help you and your child reflect on where you were when you first heard about the terrorist attacks.



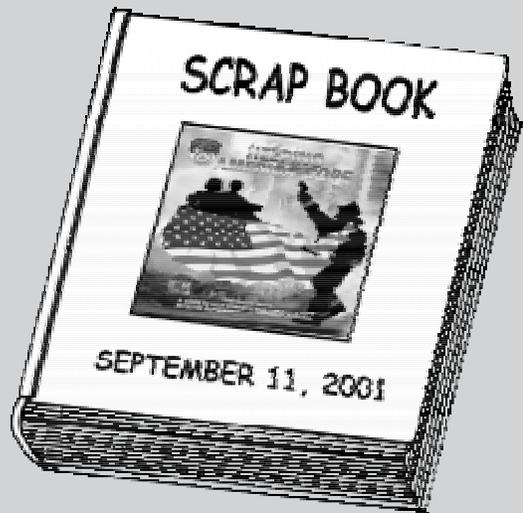
Parent Activity: Reflections

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions. Have your child work on his or her section as well. When you are both finished, discuss your answers. Be sure to save your responses, which can be used in the Joint Activity below.

1. *Describe where you were when the terrorist attacks occurred.*
2. *How did you first hear about them?*
3. *What were you doing when you first heard the news?*

JOINT ACTIVITY: A Day In History Scrapbook

Together, create a scrapbook of your family’s personal memories of September 11, 2001. You can either buy a scrapbook or make one yourself. Inside, include pictures of yourself, your child, your family and your friends taken as closely to the September 11 date as possible. Also put newspaper, magazine and Internet articles, photographs and other information related to the events of September 11 inside your scrapbook. Don’t forget to include a section where you can add your and your child’s answers to the “A Day We Will Remember” activities. When you are finished creating your scrapbook, store it in a cool, dry place away from sunlight. Who knows, one day your grandchildren will be able to read it!





A DAY WE WILL REMEMBER – Where Were You?



September 11, 2001 is a day that many people will never forget. In the future, your children will read about what happened in their history books. Below are some questions that will help you remember what happened on September 11. Answer the questions as best as you can. When you are done, trade answers with an adult and talk about what you wrote. You can even place your answers in a scrapbook.

Where were you when you heard about the terrorist attacks?

Who told you or how did you find out about the attacks?

What were you doing when you first heard about the terrorist attacks?

What did you do the rest of the day?



Talking About Feelings With Your Child

Over the next few weeks and months, there are likely to be more developments related to the United States' war on terrorism. For example, the U.S. has been engaged in military action in Afghanistan, and threats of additional terrorist attacks exist in our country. In order to understand how your child is reacting to these events, it will be important to keep the "lines of communication" open. This means creating a comfortable time and place for your child to talk with you about feelings, worries or concerns.

It will help if you...

- Pick a quiet place to talk, where there are few distractions (e.g., no television on).
- Have a regular time to talk and share, such as after school or before dinner. Talking right before bedtime may **not** be a good idea if your child is having trouble sleeping.
- Speak with another adult before you talk with your child if you feel you are having trouble with your own feelings.

Some children may be hesitant to tell parents how they are feeling because they see that their parents are already upset. Remember, it's okay for parents to express how they feel, but not to the extent that they alarm their children. Do not feel that you have to pressure your child to talk about thoughts and feelings. If you create an opportunity for your child to talk and try to be a good listener, your child will naturally bring up things that are on his or her mind. Sometimes your child's concerns may have to do with the terrorist attacks; other times they may focus on everyday events. By creating comfortable times to talk, your child will tell you when things bother them.

Here are some guidelines you can use when talking to your child:

- Listen to your child's feelings rather than controlling the conversation yourself.
- Acknowledge and normalize your child's statements by making comments like these:
 - "It sounds like you were very angry."*
 - "That part made you feel sad."*
 - "It's okay to feel that way."*
- Be neutral. Do not judge or criticize your child. Make comments like these:
 - "That's interesting."*
 - "Tell me more about it."*
 - "What do you mean?"*
- It's okay to say *"I don't know"* if your child asks a question you cannot answer.
- Pay attention to behaviors that show your child has strong feelings, such as these:
 - Fidgeting or squirming
 - Poor eye contact (doesn't look at you while talking)
 - Facial expressions that show anger, sadness or worry

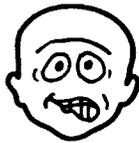


Talking About Feelings

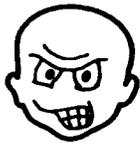


When people heard about the terrorist attacks, they reacted in many different ways and had many different types of feelings. Some of those feelings may have changed or gone away after a few weeks or months. Complete the activities below to show your feelings about the attacks.

1. Below are some pictures and words that describe how people felt after they heard about the terrorist attacks on September 11. Circle the faces that describe how you felt when you **first** heard about the attacks.



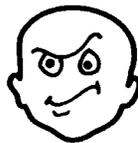
Afraid



Angry



Confused



Disbelief



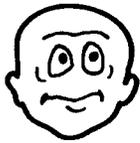
Disgusted



Enraged



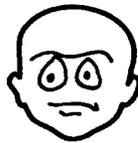
Upset



Guilty



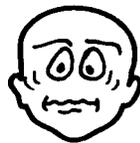
Horrified



Hurt



Lonely



Nervous



Sad



Scared



Shocked



Surprised



Suspicious



Worried

2. Below, draw how you feel **now** about the attacks. You can use the words or pictures from above to help describe your feelings.



Understanding Stress Reactions

After a disaster, children and adults may have a number of different reactions. Feelings of stress, upset, anger, fear and shock are common and normal reactions to an abnormal event such as the terrorist attacks. It is also common for children and adults to have a variety of reactions, and to have some days when they are more upset than others. Feelings and reactions change over time.

Although stress reactions are common and normal, they can create problems for children and families. For example, trouble concentrating can make it difficult for children to focus on schoolwork. Difficulty sleeping may make children more tired and irritable than usual, causing more fights and arguments. Because stress reactions can create problems in everyday living, most children will need some help from their parents when they have stress reactions.

Nobody knows your child better than you. If you pay attention to how your child is reacting to things, you will have a good idea of how to help your child. Over the next few months, many children's reactions will lessen. If your child still has a lot of stress-related reactions, or if these reactions create a problem for your child, it will help to talk to a school counselor or mental health professional.

Keep in mind that if a child was experiencing stress prior to the attacks, he or she will be particularly vulnerable to experiencing stress in this aftermath period. Also, if other attacks or distressing events occur in the next few months, many children and adults will re-experience some of their initial stress reactions. If you are unsure about how your child is feeling at some point in the future, you can repeat the activities in this section.



Parent Activity: Evaluate Your Child's Stress

These activities will help you recognize the most common kinds of stress reactions children have and to see which reactions your child is experiencing, if any. On the left side of (Parent) Page 14 is a list of common stress reactions. Check the ones you see in your child. After you are done, have your child complete their activities on (Child) Pages 13 and 15 (younger children may need assistance). When your child finishes, review their responses and compare them to yours.

Use the right side of Page 14 as an "Answer Key" to identify your child's responses from Page 15. This will help you recognize the types of stress your child is experiencing and direct you to the topics that will help your child cope with that type of stress. For example, if your child circled "YES" to Question #3, he or she may be having problems "re-experiencing" the attacks. You should refer to the recommended coping topics on the right side of Page 14. In general, the "Things You Can Do" topics are helpful for all children. If your child has specific stress reactions, you can refer to the "Special Situations" topics for help.

JOINT ACTIVITY: Group Conversation

The purpose of this activity is to let your child know that they are not alone in their reactions and fears in the wake of the attacks. Have other families with children meet in a relaxed atmosphere to discuss their reactions and thoughts surrounding the event. You can have the children choose the topics of interest and concern. If you wish, food and beverages can be served.



Understanding Stress - Measure Your Stress



Below is a ruler that will help you measure your feelings. How scared or upset are you because of the terrorist attacks? Read the ruler first. Then, starting from the bottom, color in the ruler to the number that best describes how you are feeling. The number 1 means you feel very little stress. The number 12 means you feel a lot of stress and need help.

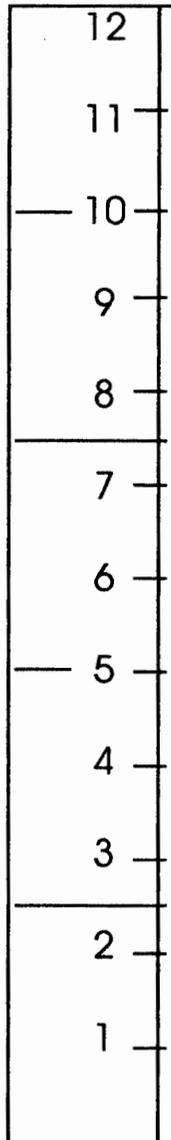
I'm really, really scared and upset. I need help.

I'm very scared and upset. I need extra help to get through this.

I'm scared, but I'll be okay with a little help.

I'm a little scared, but I'm okay.

Nothing scares or bothers me.



HELP! Too much stress!

Very Much

A Lot

Some

A Little Bit

Not At All



Understanding Stress Reactions

Below on the left side is a list of common stress reactions children have following traumatic events. **Check** the reactions, if any, you have noticed in your child over the **past few weeks**. On the right side is an “Answer Key” for (Child) Page 15. It will help you recognize your child’s stress reactions and provide a list of recommended coping topics.

Fears and Worries

My child is afraid of or worried about:

- Being alone or sleeping alone.
- Separating from a parent or loved one.
- Planes or travel.
- Buildings collapsing or being bombed.
- People who remind them of the terrorists.

Child is “re-experiencing” the attacks

My child....

- Talks about the attacks a lot or asks many questions.
- Has distressing dreams or nightmares.
- Acts or feels as if an attack is happening again.
- Can’t stop thinking about what happened.

“Avoidance” or “emotional numbing”

My child...

- Isn’t interested in their usual activities and friends.
- Is quiet and withdrawn.
- Has trouble feeling happy or other positive emotions.
- Has trouble remembering things.
- Avoids anything that reminds them of the event.

Physical Symptoms

My child...

- Has difficulty falling or staying asleep.
- Startles more easily than usual.
- Has difficulty concentrating.
- Is more irritable than usual.
- Has physical complaints like stomach or head aches.

Other Reactions (a change from before attacks)

My child...

- Has angry outbursts.
- Has problems eating (too much or too little).
- Feels sad.
- Acts like a younger child (sucks thumb, etc.).

On a scale of 1-12, (1 being the lowest and 12 highest), my child’s overall stress level is: _____

Child’s Questions: #5, 14

See Sections on:

Fears and Worries
Talking about Feelings
How to Cope
Questions and Answers

Child’s Questions: #1, 2, 3, 4, 11

See Sections on:

Intrusive Thoughts and Dreams
Talking about Feelings
How to Cope

Child’s Questions: #6, 7, 8, 13

See Sections on:

How to Cope
Talking About Feelings
Dealing with Loss and Sadness
Fears and Worries

Child’s Questions: #9, 10, 12, 15

See Sections on:

Staying Physically Healthy
Intrusive Thoughts and Dreams
Reducing Exposure
How to Cope

Child’s Questions: #16, 17, 18

See Sections on:

Managing Anger
Dealing with Loss and Sadness
How to Cope
Normal Routines



Understanding Stress



The sentences below ask about your thoughts and feelings about the terrorist attacks. Show how you have been thinking and feeling for the past few weeks by circling “YES” or “NO” for each sentence.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. I get scared, afraid or upset when I think about the attacks. | YES | NO |
| 2. I keep thinking about what happened. | YES | NO |
| 3. I think about the attacks, even when I don't want to. | YES | NO |
| 4. I have bad dreams. | YES | NO |
| 5. I worry that another attack or something bad might happen. | YES | NO |
| 6. I don't enjoy the things I usually like to do (hobbies, friends, etc.) | YES | NO |
| 7. I feel that people really don't understand how I feel now. | YES | NO |
| 8. I feel so scared, upset or sad that I can't even talk or cry. | YES | NO |
| 9. I feel more jumpy and nervous now than before the attacks. | YES | NO |
| 10. I have not been sleeping well. | YES | NO |
| 11. Thoughts or feelings about the attacks get in the way of my remembering things, like what I learned at school. | YES | NO |
| 12. It is hard to pay attention in school. | YES | NO |
| 13. I try to stay away from things that remind me of the attacks. | YES | NO |
| 14. I worry about things that didn't bother me before, like flying on a plane or being in a tall building. | YES | NO |
| 15. I have more stomachaches, headaches or other sick feelings since the attacks. | YES | NO |
| 16. I have been doing things now that I wouldn't do before, like getting into fights, talking back or disobeying more. | YES | NO |
| 17. I get mad or angry at friends and family more than usual. | YES | NO |
| 18. I feel sad about all the things that have happened | YES | NO |

(Adapted from the Reaction Index by Frederick, 1985)