



# Supporting Children

## Caring for Your Child After a School Tragedy

### Being Supportive

Most years, the end of summer and the beginning of Fall are filled with excitement and nervousness, as children get ready to start a new school year with different teachers, classmates, and perhaps a new school. This year is different. Emotions are still high and the sense of safety has been threatened.

### Listen

In our culture, we often tell our children many things and guide them. At this time, being a listener for our children will be a big support.

- Use dinnertime, homework time, or riding in the car to have some quiet time and ask your child how they are doing.
- Start with a simple question about what they are looking forward to in school and what worries they have.
- Your child might respond with usual things about having friends in their class or worries about the class work.
- Listen; don't try to have an answer for them.
- Give them the time to keep talking and see if other worries or fears come up.
- Be open to the children telling their stories and listening.



### Watch for Signs of Distress

Is your child showing behaviors that you did not see in them before the incident?

- For example: not playing with friends, fearful of leaving the home, getting angered easily, having the behavior of a younger child (bedwetting, sucking thumb, crying easily), hitting or yelling at siblings or friends, unable to concentrate, not sleeping or having nightmares

If so, then they might be showing you their distress instead of saying how they are feeling.

- Talk about what you are seeing and ask them how they are feeling.
- Ask them about what worries or fears they have
- Ask if they want to draw pictures about their fears, keep a journal, or talk with another adult about it.
- Children might not want to upset their parents with how bad or scared they feel, so they might feel more comfortable telling another adult.

### Things You Can Do With Your Child

- Talk with the Teacher- In an elementary school, let the teacher know that your child was at or near the location where the violent incident occurred. Share with the teacher any behaviors you've seen and any concerns you have.
- Talk with a School Counselor - For middle school and high school students, ask to meet with the school counselor, and let them know your child was a witness and survivor to the violent incident. Ask the school to identify a safe person and safe space in the school that your child can go to if they are feeling scared, upset, or unsafe. You can also request to meet with the School Counselor at an elementary school.
- Talk with the Principal- The Principal is the leader in the school, if you'd like to know how the school is supporting students affected by this tragedy, ask to meet with the Principal to talk about this. Other children in the community who know about the incident and are friends with your child might be feeling scared, worried, and unsafe.

Scan Me!



If you have any symptoms, questions or concerns, consult with your healthcare provider. If you have a psychiatric or medical emergency, please contact 911 or seek immediate care. This is not medical advice and does not replace care provided to you by your physician. If you need additional support, you may contact Sikh Family Center at 866-732-7392. This educational information may be reproduced or distributed with attribution and without alteration or permission. Additional educational resources are available at [saldef.org](http://saldef.org). The content of this video or document was developed by the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) in partnership with the Sikh Healing Collective (SHC). This project was funded through a grant from The Asian American Foundation (TAAF). Learn more at: [saldef.org](http://saldef.org).

