

# HELPING AMERICA COPE

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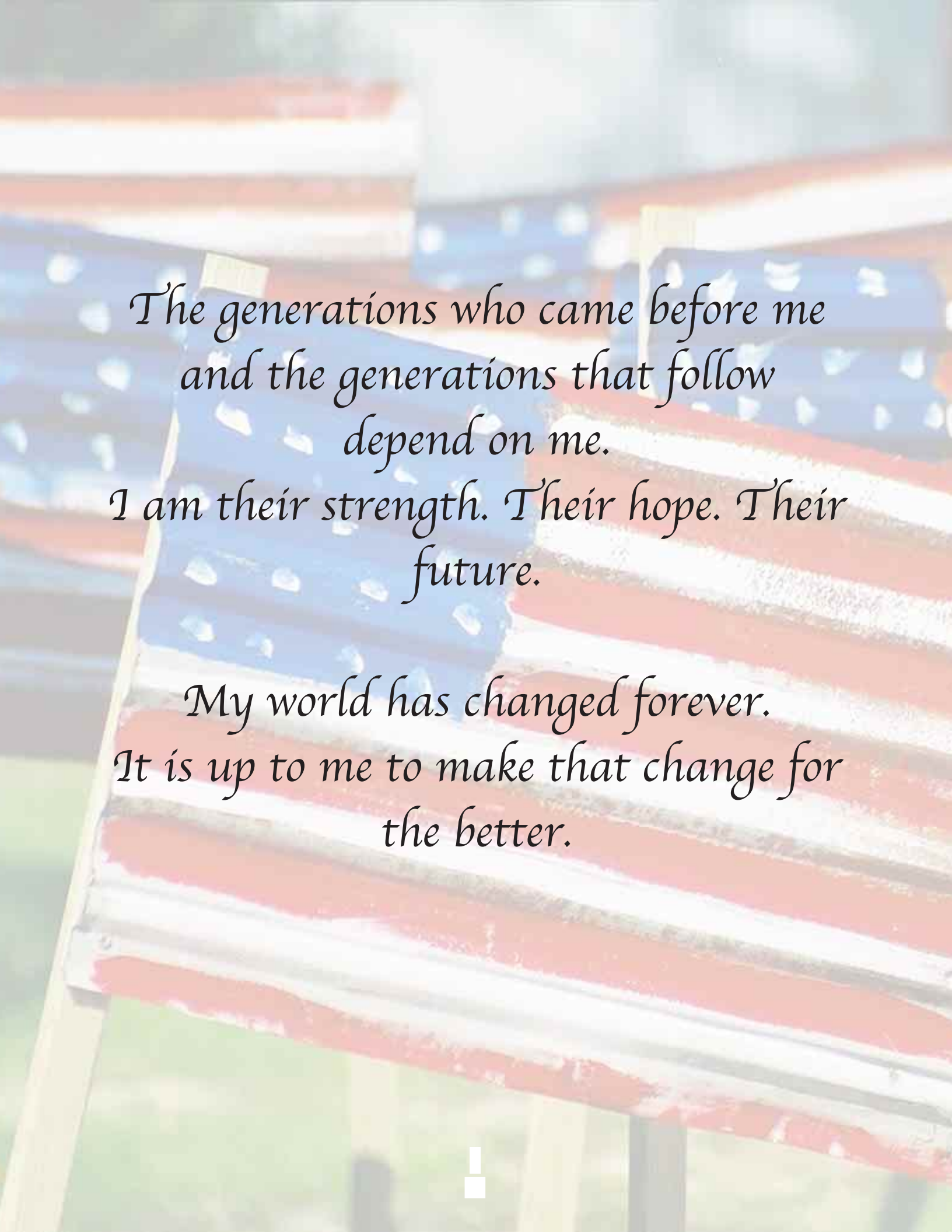
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The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes in detail.

*The generations who came before me  
and the generations that follow  
depend on me.  
I am their strength. Their hope. Their  
future.*

*My world has changed forever.  
It is up to me to make that change for  
the better.*

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Dear Parent or Caring Adult,

Since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, many parents have expressed concerns about how these events and their aftermath might affect their children. Common questions are: “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?” “How can I help my child with fears of future attacks?” This book is designed to help parents address these questions and related issues.

Children and adults’ reactions to the terrorist attacks and to worries of future attacks vary, depending in part on how close they were to the events that happened 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 working on this book. If you are having difficulty with stress, talk to another adult about your feelings 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 an adult, 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 all topics, 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 -



There are four sections in this book, which are 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 pages 36-40 may be of special interest. Section I will help you “ease into” using the book and provides suggestions for coping with the anniversary, Section II covers coping skills that will be helpful for most children, Section III focuses on skills to help children with specific situations or reactions and Section IV contains common Questions and Answers and other useful information.

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 feelings they have as a result of the terrorist attacks or with their worries about the future.

With our best wishes,

Annette La Greca

Elaine Sevin

Scott Sevin

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## COPING WITH AN ANNIVERSARY

The anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks will be a time of reflection and remembrance, a chance to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the attacks, and a chance to appreciate how far we have come. Commemorating the anniversary will help children and adults put the attacks in perspective, and assist in the healing process.

However, anniversaries of traumatic events can often be a difficult time. Emotions and feelings that were originally felt during the event may be re-experienced around an anniversary – or new reactions may arise. Even for children and adults who have been “feeling better,” it will be common for many to experience a range of emotions and reactions around the anniversary of September 11. Because of this, it will be important for you to pay attention to how your child is feeling, as well as to your own emotions.

Around the anniversary, the media will be focused on news about the attacks, commemorative events, homeland security and the war on terrorism. In fact, some networks plan to have “all day” coverage. **Limiting your child’s exposure to these programs** will be particularly helpful in coping with the anniversary, as this exposure can bring back distressing feelings. Specifically, *limit* the time you and your child view TV programs, *plan* in advance what you will watch, *participate* by watching programs with your child and *discuss* what your child has seen (See P.xx for more information).

Other things you can do to minimize your child’s distress is to keep your child in his or her **normal routine** (See P.xx), plan a **family commemoration** (See Activity Below), and have your child complete the “**Proud To Be An American**” activity on the next page. Also, the topics on *Understanding Stress Reactions* (Page x) and *How Does My Child Cope?* (Page x) will enable you to understand how your child is reacting and help your child cope more effectively. Other sections (e.g., *Fears and Worries*, Page xx) will help with specific reactions that your child may have.



### PARENT ACTIVITY – A Moment in Time

Take 15 minutes and reflect on the events of the last year. Relax, close your eyes - you can even play some relaxing music. Think about the past year. How has your life changed? How has America changed? From every event, we learn something. What have you learned? How have your priorities in life changed? If you want, share these thoughts with a family member or friend.

### JOINT ACTIVITY: A Family Commemoration

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 affected everyone in many ways. Many Americans reexamined their priorities and became closer to family and friends. Even our nation has become closer. The attacks were an example of how, without warning, unexpected events can change a person’s life. Use the September 11 anniversary to remind those you love how special they are, and to pay respect to the victims and rescuers. Plan a family commemoration (e.g., a candlelight vigil, 5 minutes of silence) to remember those who lost their lives and give thanks for our freedom and safety. If your workday permits, plan a family outing to show how you appreciate your family’s support.

## WHY I'M PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN

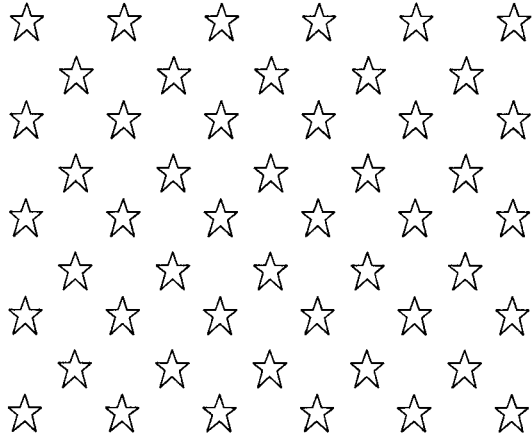
Although the events of September 11, 2001 were very upsetting, some good things have happened because of the terrorist attacks. Below, write some of the good things that have happened to you over the last year.

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One good thing that has happened is that many people realized they were proud to be Americans. People have put flags on their house or car, or have worn pins on their clothing. Why

	I am PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN because:



## A DAY WE WILL REMEMBER – Reflections

As we commemorate the first anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and look towards the future, we must remember that it is important to reflect upon the past.

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 have been 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 activities in this section will help you and your child reflect on this tragic day, and help you ease into discussing the terrorist attacks with your child.



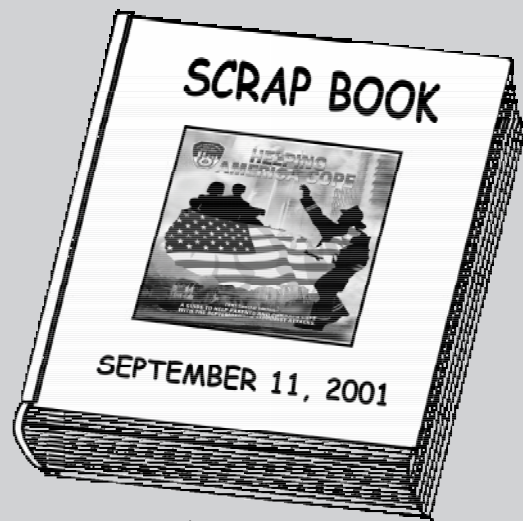
### **PARENT ACTIVITY: What Is Your Personal Story?**

Everyone in America has a story to tell about what they personally experienced on September 11, 2001. It is a story that millions of Americans have told and will continue to tell; yet no two stories are the same. On a sheet of paper, write your story, describing September 11 as you experienced it. Talk about how you felt, what you saw, what you heard and what you did on the day of the attacks. Answer the questions below and use these answers in your story. When you are finished, have your child complete their activity on the next page and help your child write his or her own story. You can place your stories in a scrapbook (see below).

1. *Where were you when the terrorist attacks occurred?*
2. *How did you first hear about them?*
3. *What do you remember most about the day?*

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: A Day In History Scrapbook**

Together, create a scrapbook of your family’s personal memories of September 11, 2001 and the anniversary. You can buy a scrapbook or make one yourself. Inside, place recent pictures of your family and friends, and some as close to the September 11 date as possible. Also include newspaper, magazine and Internet articles, photographs and other information related to the attacks and the anniversary. Don’t forget to include a section where you can add your family’s personal stories. When your scrapbook is complete, store it in a cool, dry place away from sunlight. One day, your grandchildren will be able to read it!





## A DAY WE WILL REMEMBER – Reflections



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. As a part of history, you have a story to tell about your own experiences on September 11. Below are some questions that will help you remember what happened. Answer the questions as best as you can. When you are done, trade answers with an adult and talk about what you wrote. Then, use your answers to write a story about where you were, what you saw, what you did and how you felt on September 11, 2001. You can place your story in a scrapbook.

**Where were you when you heard about the terrorist attacks?**

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**Who told you or how did you find out?**

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

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**What do you remember most about the day?**

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## A DAY WE WILL REMEMBER – The Facts

Children understand events based on their own experiences, which are more limited than adults' experiences. For some children, especially young children, the events of September 11 may not be fully understood, or their memories of the attacks may fade as time goes by.

Since September 11, many children have become familiar with the word "terrorist." They learned about the attacks from parents, caregivers, teachers and fellow students. Children watched the events on television, and saw pictures in magazines, newspapers and on the Internet. Now, time has passed and more developments related to the attacks have occurred.

An anniversary will be a time when many of the issues and events surrounding the attacks will be talked about in greater detail in the media and in general conversation. It is important that children understand the events surrounding the terrorist attacks and why people are commemorating the anniversary.



### **PARENT ACTIVITY: Check Your Child's Knowledge of the Facts**

One way to help a child cope with the aftermath of September 11 – and to prevent any misunderstandings – is to review the facts with your child. Talk about the terrorist attacks and the war on terrorism with your child, and make sure he or she understands the main facts and events that have occurred. This will open up an opportunity for discussion on many related subjects. The newspaper reporter exercise on the next page will help your child to organize some information about the events of September 11. Although time has passed, it is important to reflect on the day that changed our country's history.

### **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.

Taliban	Middle East	Immigrant
Afghanistan	Washington D.C.	Democracy
Terrorist	The Pentagon	President George W. Bush
Osama Bin Laden	New York City	Vice President Dick Cheney
Al Qaeda	World Trade Center	Colin Powell, Secretary of State
Bioterrorism	Ground Zero	Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
Anthrax	Police Department	John Ashcroft, U.S. Attorney General
Smallpox	Fire Department	Tom Ridge, Homeland Security
Pakistan	NATO	Rudolph W. Giuliani
Islam	F.B.I.	United Nations (UN)
Muslim	C.I.A.	Operation Enduring Freedom
Iraq	U.S. Coast Guard	Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines
Saddam Hussein	U.S. Customs Service	Special Operations Forces (SOF)
Biological Agent	Nuclear Weapon	Discrimination



## 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 died 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. Pretend you are a reporter, working for a newspaper. You have been given an assignment to write an article for the anniversary. You can choose any subject you want, but it must be related to the September 11 attacks. Choose a topic, do some investigation and write an article below. Remember, a good reporter relates the facts of a situation. Use another sheet of paper if you need more room.**

- Possible topics:
- Why are people commemorating the anniversary of the attacks?
  - How has our country changed since September 11?
  - What has your community done to protect against terrorism?

# The Anniversary Times

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Title of Article

Written By: \_\_\_\_\_




## Talking About Feelings With Your Child

Over the next few months, there are likely to be more developments related to the United States' war on terrorism. For example, the U.S. is involved in military action, and threats of additional terrorist attacks exist in our country. In order to understand how your child is reacting to these events and how they are coping with the anniversary, 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 are hesitant to tell parents how they are feeling because they see that their parents are 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 first 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 while. 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.



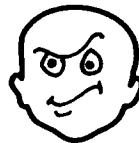
Afraid



Angry



Confused



Disbelief



Disgusted



Enraged



Upset



Guilty



Horrified



Hurt



Lonley



Nervous



Sad



Scared



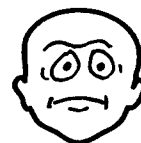
Shocked



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. How many of the feelings from Question 1 do you still have? What new feelings do you have?



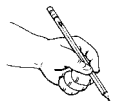
## Understanding Stress Reactions

After a disaster, children and adults may have a number of different reactions. Feelings of stress, upset, anger, fear and shock are normal reactions to a traumatic 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. Many children and adults may feel that things are “over,” or have been feeling better recently. Keep in mind that the anniversary can stir up old reactions or new feelings about the events of September 11.

Often, an initial event may lead to other distressing events that can prolong or add to stress reactions (e.g., parent loses job). Because of this, some children may have stress reactions or behavior problems months after a traumatic event. Although these stress reactions are common and normal, they can create problems. 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, leading to fights and arguments. Because stress reactions can create problems in everyday living, most children will need some help from an adult 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 time, 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 mental health professional or school counselor.

Keep in mind that if a child was stressed before the attacks, or had experienced a previous traumatic event, he or she will be particularly vulnerable to stress in this aftermath period. If other attacks or distressing events occur, many children and adults will re-experience some of their initial reactions. If you are unsure about how your child is feeling, repeat the activities in this section as needed.



### Parent Activity: Evaluate Your Child’s Stress

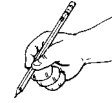
The following activities will help you recognize the most common kinds of stress reactions children have and to see which reactions your child is experiencing, if any.

**Measure Your Stress:** On the next page are two rulers for your child to color. They will help your child express how they are feeling. If your child marks level 6 or higher on any of the rulers, be sure to pay close attention to how he or she is feeling and what you can do to help.

**Identify Your Child’s Stress:** 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) Page 15 – younger children may need assistance with this activity. 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 and the “How Does Your Child Cope?” sections are helpful for all children. If your child has specific stress reactions, you can refer to the “Special Situations” topics for help.



# Understanding Stress - Measure Your Stress



Below are rulers that will help you measure how you feel. 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.

How upset are you <u>now</u> because of the terrorist attacks?			How scared or upset are you that another terrorist attack may happen?		
<b>I'm really, really upset</b>	12	<b>I need help.</b>	<b>I'm really, really scared and upset.</b>	12	<b>I need help.</b>
	11			11	
	10			10	
<b>I'm very upset</b>	9	<b>I could use extra help.</b>	<b>I'm very scared and upset.</b>	9	<b>I could use extra help.</b>
	8			8	
	7			7	
<b>I'm still upset</b>	6	<b>I would like a little help.</b>	<b>I'm scared.</b>	6	<b>I would like a little help.</b>
	5			5	
	4			4	
<b>I'm a little upset</b>	3	<b>I'll be okay.</b>	<b>I'm a little scared.</b>	3	<b>I'll be okay.</b>
	2			2	
	1			1	
<b>I am not upset at all.</b>		<b>I am fine.</b>	<b>Nothing scares or bothers me.</b>		<b>I am fine.</b>



## Understanding Stress Reactions

Below 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. Some reactions may be related to the terrorist attacks while others may be related to other stressors. This doesn’t matter. What is important is that you recognize how your child is feeling and know how to help your child.

### 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.
- Bridges, tunnels or crowded places

### 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.).

### Child’s Questions: #5, 14

#### *See Sections on:*

Fears and Worries  
Talking about Feelings  
How Does My Child Cope?  
Questions and Answers

### Child’s Questions: #1, 2, 3, 4, 11

#### *See Sections on:*

Intrusive Thoughts and Dreams  
Talking about Feelings  
How Does My Child Cope?

### Child’s Questions: #6, 7, 8, 13

#### *See Sections on:*

How Does My Child 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 Does My Child Cope?

### Child’s Questions: #16, 17, 18

#### *See Sections on:*

Managing Anger  
Dealing with Loss and Sadness  
Normal Routines



## Understanding Stress – How Have You Been Feeling?



The sentences below ask about your thoughts and feelings about the terrorist attacks. Show how you have been thinking or feeling for the past few weeks by checking the box that best describes how you feel for each sentence.

	A LOT	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1. I get scared, afraid or upset when I think about the attacks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I keep thinking about what happened.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I think about the attacks, even when I don't want to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have bad dreams.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I worry that another attack or something bad might happen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I don't enjoy the things I usually like to do (like sports).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I feel that people really don't understand how I feel now.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I feel so scared, upset or sad that I can't even talk or cry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I feel more jumpy and nervous now than before the attacks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I have not been sleeping well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Thoughts or feelings about the attacks get in the way of my remembering things, like what I learned at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. It is hard to pay attention in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I try to stay away from things that remind me of the attacks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I worry about things that didn't bother me before, like being in a plane or tall building, or being away from my parents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I have more stomachaches, headaches or other sick feelings since the attacks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I have been doing things now that I wouldn't do before, like getting into fights, talking back or disobeying more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I get mad or angry at friends and family more than usual.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I feel sad about all the things that have happened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*(Adapted with permission from Frederick, C.J., Pynoos, R., & Nader, K. (1992). Reaction Index to Psychic Trauma Form C. Manuscript, UCLA.)*





## How Does Your Child Cope?

Everyone has their own ways of coping with stressful events. Some ways of coping are positive and more effective than others. For example, some positive ways to cope with stressful events include seeking support from others, solving a problem, trying to remain calm and trying to look at the positive side of things. On the other hand, some ways of coping usually do not help a difficult situation. Yelling, getting angry and blaming others are all examples of unhelpful ways of coping. These ways of coping can lead to new problems.

Try to encourage your child to use positive ways of coping when dealing with upsetting events related to the terrorist attacks or other stressors. Although it is not always clear what specific event may be upsetting your child, it is always helpful to use positive coping strategies. The activities in this section will help you identify how your child is coping with recent events and encourage positive ways of coping.



### Parent Activity: Identifying How Your Child Copes

On the next page are some questions about the ways your child tries to cope. Have your child answer the questions in a quiet place. When your child is finished, go over the answers together. While your child is completing their activity, think about how he or she usually copes with bad events. Below, write in the positive and negative ways your child copes.

Positive Ways My Child Copes	Negative Ways My Child Copes

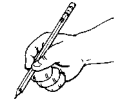
### JOINT ACTIVITY: Evaluate How Your Child Copes

Review your child’s responses together and talk about them. Items #3, 6, 9 and 12 are positive coping strategies that you can encourage your child to use. For example, item #3 reflects “having a positive outlook” and item #6 reflects “problem solving” as well as “talking about things that are upsetting.” In addition, item #9 reflects “keeping calm” and item #12 reflects “seeking support and comfort from others.” These coping strategies can help your child deal with stress better. Additional ideas for coping are covered in other sections of this book. “Seeking information” and “finding distraction” can also be effective ways of coping for some children.

The remaining items on the child’s page (#1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, and 11) are unhelpful ways of coping. They usually don’t help a difficult situation and sometimes can make it worse. For example, items #1 and 2 reflect “social withdrawal,” items #4 and 5 reflect “blaming self or others,” item #7 reflects “wishful thinking,” items #8 and 11 reflect “angry feelings” and item #10 reflects “feeling helpless.” If your child circled some of these items, you might want to help him or her focus on other ways of coping with stress. Again, some sections in this book will give you some good ideas.



## How Do I Cope With Things That Happen?



Here is a list of things that children do to solve problems or feel better when bad things happen. Think about what you have done to feel better about the terrorist attacks or other things that have happened. Circle YES or NO for each of the sentences to show what you did to feel better about what has happened.

	<b><u>Did you do this?</u></b>	
1. I stayed by myself.	YES	NO
2. I kept quiet about the bad things that happened.	YES	NO
3. I tried to see the good side of things.	YES	NO
4. I blamed myself for causing the bad things that happened.	YES	NO
5. I blamed someone other than the terrorists for causing the bad things that happened.	YES	NO
6. I tried to fix the bad things by doing something or talking to someone.	YES	NO
7. I wished the bad things had never happened.	YES	NO
8. I yelled, screamed or got mad.	YES	NO
9. I tried to calm myself down.	YES	NO
10. I didn't do anything because the bad things couldn't be fixed.	YES	NO
11. I got mad or angry at others.	YES	NO
12. I tried to feel better by spending time with others like my family, grownups or friends.	YES	NO

(This was adapted from the KIDCOPE, with the permission of Anthony Spirito.)



## Topic 6 Things That Can Help - Normal Routines

One of the most upsetting aspects of disasters and traumatic events for children and adults is that they shake people's feelings of safety and security. Helping your child feel safe and secure after a traumatic event will help your child feel less distressed. One of the ways to help your child cope is to keep your child in his or her normal routine.

Everybody has a normal routine that they more or less follow on a daily basis. By now, you and your child should have resumed your normal, everyday routines – even if some of your activities are different today than they were prior to the attacks. By continuing normal activities and routines, your child will be more comfortable because their day is more predictable. This familiar environment will help your child feel safer and more secure. It will also help to distract your child from feelings of distress. Keeping your child in his or her normal routine will be particularly important during the anniversary period, and during stressful times such as a terrorist threat or another attack.

This section is designed to help you and your child identify a “normal routine.” It will also help you identify and encourage your child's favorite everyday activities. Before your child begins working on the next page, you can make a photocopy of the page and let him or her complete the same activities for both normal weekday and weekend routines. For younger kids, this may be best done as a joint activity.



### **Parent Activity: Identifying Your Normal Routines**

What are your normal routines? On a sheet of paper, list them. Include what activities you do and the times that you typically do them. Keep a separate list for your weekday and weekend routines. When you work on the joint activity with your child, see if you can suggest some favorite everyday activities to add to both of your normal routines that do not take up a lot of time. For example, you can ride bicycles; or play catch, cards, board games or sports.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Plan Some Fun Activities**

Together, review your child's current routine list from Page 19. It may be the case that your child's routine has changed since September 11, 2001 – this is okay. Have your child highlight or mark with a star his or her favorite everyday activities. Then, make a list of favorite activities you and your child enjoy doing together. Be sure to add some of these favorite everyday activities to both of your normal routines that you will enjoy doing together.

If you can, take out your daily planner or calendar and, along with your child, plan the next week or two. Write in or draw each favorite everyday activity that is planned. You can update your schedule periodically with different activities.

A good idea is to let your child create his or her own calendar. Have them write in or draw their “schedule” and add in each planned favorite everyday activity. You can then hang your child's calendar in an easily viewable place, such as on a refrigerator door.



# Things That Can Help - Normal Routines



What is your normal routine? On the left side, list things that you do on a normal day. When you are done, complete the clocks on the right side. Draw in the missing hands on each clock to show what time you normally do the listed activity.

## What I normally do

In the morning:

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In the afternoon:

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In the evening:

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Before bedtime:

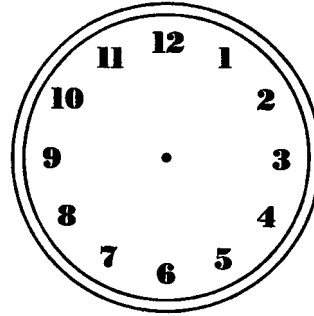
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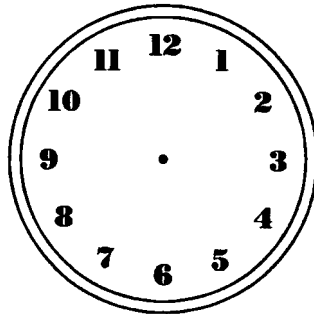
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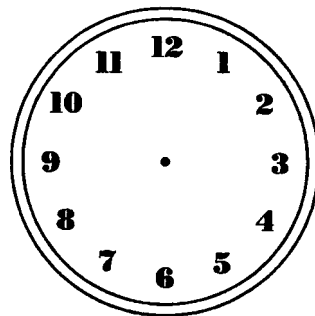
## Complete the clocks



What time I normally wake up



What time I normally eat lunch



What time I normally go to bed

Are there any favorite activities you have not done recently that you would like to do? If so, list them below.

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## Things That Can Help - Reducing Exposure

Reducing a child's exposure to upsetting images of the terrorist attacks, to things that resemble the attacks and to warnings of future attacks will help your child cope with the aftermath of September 11 and the current war on terrorism. This will be particularly helpful around the time of the first anniversary, when images and stories about the September 11 attacks will be prominent on television and in print.

Visual images are ways of "re-experiencing" a traumatic event. For example, after the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, children who watched television programs with images of the bombing and stories of the victims' families had more distress and fears than children who did not watch much television. Upsetting images can lead to increased fears, bad dreams and trouble sleeping. Because of the distressing aspect of television images, your child will feel better if you limit viewing of terrorist-related programs, particularly the news and special programs about the September 11 attacks or the families who were hurt. It will also help to limit television shows, movies, Internet sites and video games that have a lot of violence.



### Parent Activity: Develop Your Own Television Guide

Develop a plan to promote positive viewing habits. This will help limit your child's exposure to upsetting images in general, and help your child cope with these troubled times. Follow these rules:

**LIMIT** – the amount of time your child watches television. Set a pre-chosen period your child can watch television each day. Turn the television off when the time is up. Try to limit your own viewing as well to set a good example.

**PLAN** – with your child, in advance, what he or she will watch. Use a TV guide or newspaper to help your child decide. Don't let your child flip channels, even during commercials. If you are unsure of a program's rating, go to <http://tv.yahoo.com> or [www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org) for a ratings guide.

**PARTICIPATE** – in watching programs with your child (or watch at least one episode of a series). You can periodically ask if there is anything that your child has questions about or that bothers them. Turn a program off if it becomes upsetting and talk to your child about it.

**ENCOURAGE** – your child to participate in other fun activities like reading, sports or card games. These activities will provide a distraction from upsetting events and help your child feel more in control. Use your child's responses from the next page to help you identify alternative activities.

### JOINT ACTIVITY: Family Day

Need an excellent alternative to watching television or surfing the Internet? Create a Family Day! Have your family pick one day out of the week or month and set it aside to spend quality time together. Do not let job responsibilities or schoolwork interfere with your day. Choose fun activities that everyone will enjoy. For example, have a family picnic, visit a park, museum or aquarium, go to a beach, take a scenic day trip or volunteer for a community service project.



# Things That Can Help - What I Like To Do



Fill in the blanks. Tell how many days a week you do each activity listed.

## ACTIVITY

Watch TV

Listen to music

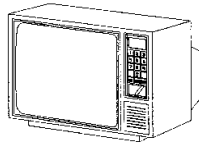
Play with friends

Do family activities

Read a book

Play videogames

Play sports



## DAYS PER WEEK

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### List your favorites for each category:

My favorite hobbies are:

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My favorite sports are:

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My favorite family activities are:

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My favorite musicians are:

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My favorite books are:

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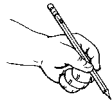




## Topic 8 Things That Can Help - Staying Physically Healthy

Stress can affect people physically as well as mentally. After a distressing event, many people do not feel like eating or may have trouble sleeping. These changes make it harder for a person to cope with stress. Just as it is important to continue normal everyday activities, it is also important to stay active and healthy. This is especially true for children. A child who is healthy and physically fit will find it easier to cope with stress. In fact, all of us do better when we feel strong and healthy.

The activities in this section are designed to help you identify changes in your child’s eating, sleeping and exercise habits. They are also designed to help improve your child’s overall health, including diet and physical condition. Have your child complete the activity on Page 23 while you finish the one below.



### Parent Activity: Track Your Child’s Health

Observe your child over the next few days. Note any aspects of your child’s health behaviors that are a problem or that have changed recently. Write down any problems or changes you have noticed in the following categories:

Eating meals:	Sleeping or resting:
Exercise:	Increased complaints:

### JOINT ACTIVITY: Coping Chart

Take a look at the physical changes you have noticed in your child. If there are areas that need improvement, work together on creating a “Coping Chart.” List things you and your child can do to cope. Include some of your child’s answers from Page 23. Together, complete the chart. Some examples are:

<p><b><u>Eating (lack of appetite):</u></b>          Drink a milkshake with fruit          Take vitamins          Have a regular family meal time          Purchase healthy snacks (raisins, carrots)</p>	<p><b><u>Trouble falling or staying asleep:</u></b>          Sleep with light on or a night-light          Snuggle with a favorite doll          Play soft music          Count backward from 100</p>
<p><b><u>Exercise (lack of):</u></b>          Join a sports league or youth group          Learn a new sport (tennis or dance lessons)          Develop a personal exercise routine          Do outdoor activities (hiking, biking, etc.)</p>	<p><b><u>Increased physical complaints:</u></b>          Have child checked by family doctor          Practice relaxation to reduce stress (see Page 35)</p>



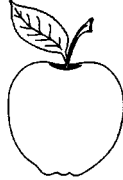
## Things That Can Help - Staying Physically Healthy



By keeping healthy, you can deal better with the things that make you stressed or worried. In the boxes below, write or draw what you do to keep healthy for each category. Some examples are given to help you get started.

### My favorite healthy foods

Apples



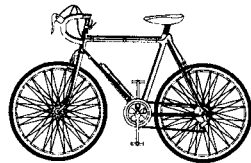
### How I relax before bedtime

Listen to music



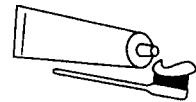
### My favorite ways to exercise

Ride my bike



### How I keep my body healthy

Brush my teeth







## Fears and Worries - What You Can Do

After a traumatic event, children and adults often feel fearful and worried. This is especially true after a terrorist attack, as the attacks were *intended* to cause fear and anxiety. Since September 11, many children and adults have reported fears and worries about their personal safety and the safety of loved ones. Many children have also expressed specific fears about *future* attacks, such as fears of being in or around tall buildings and airplanes. Such fears and worries are normal. However, if they interfere with your child's activities (e.g., your child avoids going to school or playing outside with friends), then your child will need more help in coping with them.

If you understand the kinds of things your child worries about, you can help your child cope with those worries. The activity on the next page will help your child identify their fears and worries. It is a good idea to repeat this activity periodically as the focus of your child's worries may change over time. In addition, review the information below and see if you notice any of these anxiety reactions in your child. Then, develop a "worry buster" plan to help your child cope (See P. xx).

### **Common Fears And Anxieties After Traumatic Events**

Below are some of the most common types of anxiety reactions that children report after traumatic events. (For more information, see the Anxiety Disorders Association of America website - [www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)).

**Separation Anxiety:** Children who feel extremely anxious when they are away from home or separated from their parents/caregiver may be experiencing separation anxiety. Signs of this include: visible distress when a parent/caregiver is away; fear of going places alone; fear of going to school or camp (because of separation from loved ones); insisting that a parent stay with them at bedtime; getting up at night to be with a parent; nightmares about separation and following a parent around. Separation fears may be a major reason for a child's refusal to go to school.

**Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** PTSD is a set of trauma symptoms that occur in response to a traumatic event. Symptoms of PTSD are very common after trauma and include:

- Re-experiencing the event – intrusive thoughts or nightmares about the event. (See P. x )
- Avoidance or emotional numbing – having no feelings, lack of interest in usual activities, feeling as if no one understands you. See Page x)
- Hyperarousal – feeling more jittery and nervous than usual, having problems sleeping or concentrating. See page x)

**Other Specific Fears:** Children who are extremely anxious about future attacks may become fearful about situations that they perceive to be "dangerous." This may show up as fears or avoidance of: going out alone; being in crowded places; a specific type of transportation (e.g., planes, trains, cars); or travel over bridges or through tunnels.



### **Parent Activity: What Are Your Worries?**

Children often "learn" about potential sources of fear and worry by observing others, including their parents and teachers. Because of this, it will be helpful to identify some of the things you worry about. On a sheet of paper, write down your fears or worries. You can use the following categories as a guide: Work; Family; Travel; Health; Friends; Children; World; Other



## Fears and Worries - What Do You Worry About?



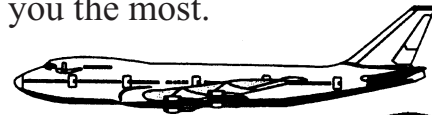
A “worry” is when you think something bad might happen. For example, you might have a “worry” that you will get a bad test score. It is important that you talk with a parent or other adult about some of the fears or worries you have.

1. Who can you talk to about your fears or worries? List those people below.

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2. Below, list some of your worries or fears that bother you. Use the pictures outside the bubble to help you. Circle the worry or fear that bothers you the most.



The things I worry most about are:

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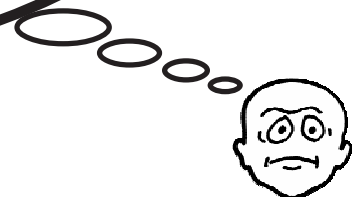
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## Fears and Worries - What You Can Do

Fears and worries are normal reactions children and adults have after experiencing a traumatic event. Although common, they can become a problem if your child's reactions are severe, persist for a long time or interfere with your child's functioning (e.g., child cannot sleep well, is not doing well in school or is having problems with friends or family).

In general, children's fears tend to lessen over time, especially if they can gradually "face their fears" in a safe and protected manner. For example, a child who is anxious about a parent's traveling away from home may become less fearful if a parent does travel and return home safely on several occasions. However if your child's fears or anxieties do not seem to be getting better over time or they interfere with daily activities, your child will need professional advice or counseling.

Keep in mind that fears and worries can be learned through television and other media sources. This is why we have included a section to help reduce media use (see Pages 20-21). You might also find a relaxation exercise useful (see Page 33). In addition, be careful to monitor what you say to other adults about your fears and worries when your child may be listening, as this can communicate new worries and concerns to your child.

Below are some further suggestions for helping your child cope with fears. You can use these suggestions when completing the "Worry Buster Plan" activity on the next page.

- Provide reassurance that your child is safe and that our government is doing everything possible to keep all Americans safe.
- Identify people your child can talk to at home or in school about worries. Sometimes worries lessen when a child has someone to share them with.
- Encourage your child to "face fears" in a gradual, safe and protected way.
- Reward your child for facing fears. Don't reward your child's fears by letting your child avoid school, chores or other important activities because of fears and worries.
- Develop a "plan of action" or alternative activities your child can do when worried or afraid.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Develop a "Worry Buster" Plan**

Along with your child, develop a "Worry Buster" plan. Use the next page or a separate sheet of paper. In the left column, have your child write his or her worries, which they identified on the previous activity (P. xx). For each "worry" that your child has listed, develop a plan to cope with that worry. Here is an example:



#### **Child's Worry:**

Something will happen when the child is in school and he or she won't be able to reach the parent.

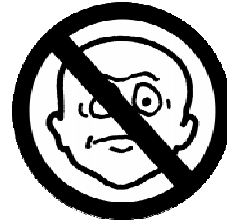


#### **Worry Buster Plan:**

Create an index card for your child to carry with emergency phone numbers to reach the parent. Give a copy to the teacher and school.

## Worry Buster Plan

Together with an adult, develop a Worry Buster Plan! On the left side, write in the fears and worries that bother you. Use your answers from the “What Do You Worry About?” activity on Page XX. Then, with an adult, think of a way to help you deal with that fear or worry. Write your plan to *BUST THAT WORRY* on the right side of the worry.



Worry	Worry Buster



## Intrusive Thoughts and Dreams - What You Can Do

Sometimes after a traumatic event, children keep thinking about the event or “see images” related to the event in their mind, even though they don’t want to. For example, a child might keep thinking about the World Trade Center towers collapsing or might visualize planes hitting a building, even when they are in school or doing other activities. Sometimes these intrusive thoughts happen at bedtime and make it difficult for children to fall or stay asleep.

Although these stress reactions are common, especially during the first weeks or months after an upsetting event, the unwanted “images” may be very distressing. If your child is having these kinds of thoughts or images, or is having trouble sleeping, the activities in this section may be very helpful. It will also help to limit television viewing (see Reducing Exposure, Page 20), encourage good health (see Staying Physically Healthy, Page 22) and encourage your child to do more enjoyable things (see Normal Routines, Page 18). Also, encourage your child to tell you about any bad dreams, as it will help them go away.

Another way to help stop intrusive thoughts is to have your child to re-direct thinking away from the upsetting thoughts and focus on something more positive. If the intrusive thoughts happen at bedtime, it will help to have a routine that focuses on something pleasant and distracting, such as a bedtime story.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: STOP Bad Thoughts**

Ask your child if he or she has any thoughts about terrorist attacks, or if any “pictures” or “images” come into their head that bothers them. If so, tell your child that this is very normal after a bad thing happens, such as a terrorist attack. Find out when these bad thoughts or pictures normally occur (e.g., at bedtime, in school, etc.).

Next, explain to your child that when they have bad thoughts or images, he or she should **STOP** and think about something else. Tell your child that you will make a STOP sign together to remind them to STOP when they are having bothersome thoughts and do something else.

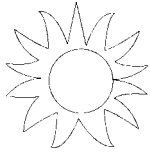
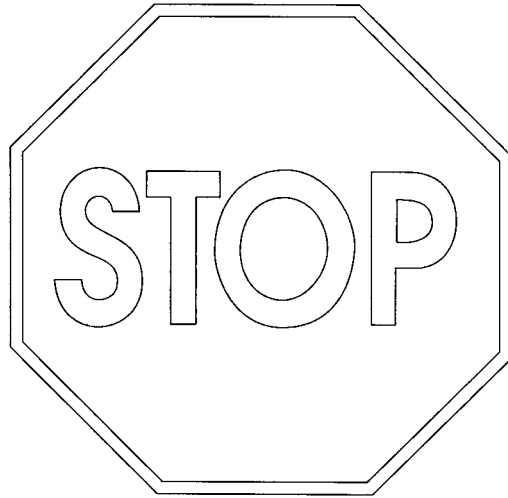
Together, complete the next page. You may want to photocopy the page before you work on it so your child will be able to carry a copy with them. On the top half of the page is a STOP sign. Let your child color it in. Below the sign is a space for you and your child to write down **OTHER** things your child can do when they start to have bothersome thoughts. This may depend on whether the thoughts occur during the day or at night. The following are some examples to give you and your child some ideas.

<b>DAYTIME</b>	<b>NIGHT-TIME or BEDTIME</b>
Call a friend	Read a story
Call a parent	Listen to music
Read a book	Count backward from 100
Ride a bike	Practice relaxation (see Page 33)
Hug a parent	Draw a picture
Sing or hum a song	Have parent “tuck” you into bed

(Adapted from Robin Gurwitch, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center)



# When You Have Bad Thoughts and Dreams:



and think of **OTHER** things to do.



**DAYTIME**

**NIGHT-TIME or BEDTIME**

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When you have a bad thought or dream, it will also help to **STOP** what you are doing, (close your eyes, take a deep breath,) and think of a peaceful or happy place. Below, draw or describe a peaceful place that you can think of when you have a bad thought or dream.



## Managing Anger - What You Can Do

It is not unusual for children and adults to have angry or irritable feelings after a disaster or around an anniversary of a distressing event. Often, children may want to “blame others” for bad things that happened, or may just be more irritable than usual. It is understandable that many people are angry after the terrorist attacks. However, it is important that children and adults find ways to cope with angry feelings.

If your child is feeling angry or irritable, explain that it is okay to feel that way. This is very normal. Explain that it is NOT okay to take out angry feelings on other people. For example, it is okay to feel angry, but not okay to fight and argue with others. Also, it is not okay to do something mean to someone who reminds you of the terrorists.

There are two kinds of activities in this section. The first activity focuses on how to resolve conflicts and will help your child manage angry feelings and disagreements with others. The second activity focuses on multicultural awareness - that is understanding others who are different. This activity is meant to help children accept others and to keep them from “striking out” at people who may remind them of the terrorists.



### **Parent Activity: Developing an Anger Management Plan**

Keep a brief diary of your child’s behavior over the next week or two. Take notes on what happens before, during and after each angry outburst. Use this to develop an “anger management” plan.

**Before** – *With whom does your child get angry? What situations trigger the anger?*

**During** – *What does your child do when angry? What is the behavior?*

**After** – *What happens after? Do you discipline your child? Do you ignore the behavior?*

If your child gets angry or annoyed at the same person, or in the same situation, try changing the situation to prevent the angry outbursts. For example, if your child gets angry when a sibling changes the television channel, it may help to have family rules about television viewing. You can even have your child “talk through” angry feelings with the person who is the target.

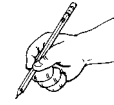
Also, look at what happens after your child gets angry. Does your child get his or her way? Try not to ignore the angry behavior or give in to your child’s misbehavior. Instead, calmly tell them that “feeling angry” is okay, but “acting angry” is not. Have your child sit quietly until they calm down and then talk over what is bothering them to see if the situation can be resolved. If this does not work, you may have to discipline your child. For example, depending on your child’s age, you can have them miss a favorite TV show, go to bed a half hour earlier than usual or do an extra chore.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Role Playing**

Ask your child to complete the activity on the following page. Afterward, go over your child’s ideas for “positive” things to do when feeling angry, and help identify additional things they can do. Then, play a “pretend” game with your child. You pretend to do something annoying and your child has to practice the STOP, LOOK and LISTEN ideas. Your child can also practice doing something other than getting mad. Involve other family members in the game as well.



## Managing Anger - Conflict Resolution



Since the terrorist attacks, many people have felt angry or irritable. You might have these feelings, too. It is okay to feel angry, but it is **not** okay to fight or argue with someone because you are upset or angry at someone or something else.

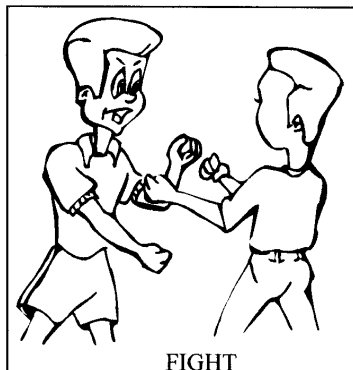
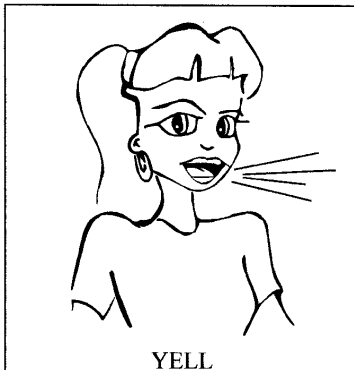
Sometimes you may feel angry with your family, teachers, friends or classmates. If you are upset and angry with someone, or get into an argument, here are a few steps

**STOP** - what you are doing and count to 10 slowly.

**LOOK** - at each other. Focus your attention on the other person.

**LISTEN** - to each other's stories about what is wrong and think together of a possible solution.

**Below are some of the things people do when they get angry. These are bad ways to cope with angry feelings.**



**Below, draw or write some good things you can do when you feel angry or get into an argument with someone. If you need some ideas, ask an adult for help.**





## **Managing Anger - Multicultural Awareness**

One result of the terrorist attacks has been discrimination and even some harmful acts against people who look Arabic. Although many people are angry or afraid, discrimination and harmful acts are not positive ways to cope with these feelings.

Parents are powerful role models for children. Children can learn from their parents both good and bad qualities. That is why it is important for you (as a role model) to think about what you say and do in front of your child. Is there anything, even unintentional, that might communicate to your child that certain people or groups of people are not to be trusted or respected? This is a good time to tell your child that people of all races and color should be respected and treated fairly, even if they seem “different.”

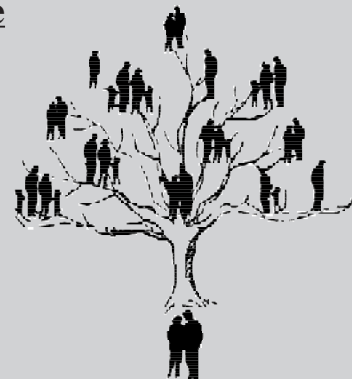
The term “Arab-American” is used to identify Americans who can trace their ancestry to, or who immigrated from, Arabic-speaking areas of the Middle East. This can include individuals from a number of countries, religions, cultures and ethnic backgrounds. To many Americans, Arabic customs, beliefs and way of life seem strange and foreign. Many children and adults are naturally fearful of people and things they do not understand. If your child is unfamiliar with Arabic culture, this can lead to uncomfortable feelings, nervousness or fear. Warnings or threats of additional terrorist attacks can also heighten feelings of fear or anger. One way to help children cope with these feelings is to increase their awareness of Arabs and Arab culture.

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Increase Awareness Through Research**

Help your child do some research to promote a better understanding of Arab culture. Use resources from a library, books, the Internet or even interviews. Let your child identify and choose an Arabic country and write a report on it. Make sure your child talks about the country’s geography, weather, system of government, economy and history, as well as its population’s culture, ethnic background and religious heritage. If your child is too young to write a report, you can have them draw a picture of an object that they came across in their research.

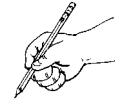
### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Family Tree**

Most Americans, or their ancestors, originally came from another country. Where did your family come from? Help your child trace his or her own family’s history and create a family tree. Go back as far as possible. Interviews with relatives will help. You can even have family members make a cassette or video recording explaining their life histories.





## Managing Anger - Multicultural Awareness



When the terrorist attacks occurred, many people felt angry and afraid. It is okay to feel this way, but it is not okay to say or do mean things to people who remind you of the terrorists. Because the terrorists came from Arabic nations, some people are mad at or afraid of people who look Arabic. But there are many, many Arabs in the world and very, very few terrorists. Many Arabs feel bad about the terrorist attacks.

There are many Arab-Americans in the United States. Arab-Americans are people who came from, or whose families came from, an Arabic country, but are American just like you. You must be careful not to take out any angry feelings on people who look Arabic or who remind you of the terrorists. If you have an Arab-American friend, you should continue to be that person's friend. Remember, the President and our government are doing all they can to catch terrorists; that is their job. It is your job to be a good American and be accepting of others.

### Complete the activity below:

<b>OUTSIDE</b>	<b>INSIDE</b>
Look in the mirror and write down all the things you can see about yourself on the <u>outside</u> . Example: Hair color, eye color, etc.	Now, close your eyes and think about what you are really like on the <u>inside</u> . Write these qualities down. Example: Friendly, smart, etc.
<b>MAKE A NEW FRIEND</b> <b>Find someone in your school or neighborhood you do not know.</b>	
<b>OUTSIDE</b>	<b>INSIDE</b>
Write down all the things about your new friend you can see from the outside.	Now, introduce yourself to them and write down what they are like on the inside.



## Coping with Loss and Sadness - What You Can Do

After traumatic events, many children and adults have feelings of sadness and loss. This is very common. In fact, since the terrorist attacks, many children and adults have reported feeling this way. Some children and adults feel sad because they lost family members, co-workers or friends in the attacks. Most people did not lose family members or friends, but they still feel sad. There are many reasons why people feel sad. Sometimes they feel badly for the people who lost family members or friends, they don't know what to do to help the situation, or because things "just don't seem the same" since the terrorist attacks.

The activity in this section will help you and your child identify and talk about feelings of sadness. It will also identify things you can do to help your child cope with sadness and loss. If you are concerned about your child feeling sad, review the information in the box below on "signs of depression."

### **In general, some things that can help children when they feel sad are:**

- Focusing on the positive things they still have (e.g., health, loved ones, etc.)
- Talking to a friend or family member when feeling "blue."
- Doing activities they usually enjoy (see Pages 18 – 21 for ideas)
- Doing things to help others (see How Can I Help? on Page 39 for some ideas)

### **Recognizing Signs of Depression**

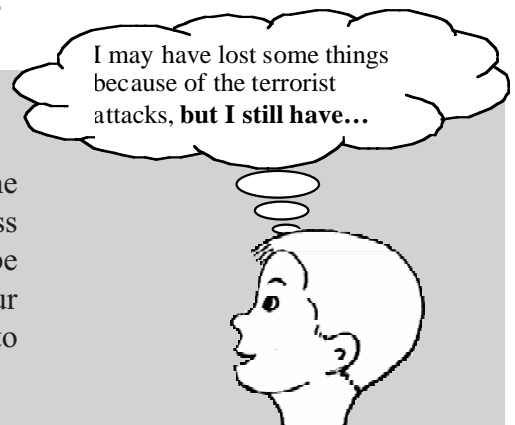
Feeling sad, depressed and irritable is common after a traumatic event. This is especially true for children who lost a loved one or who's way-of-life has drastically changed since the attacks. These feelings may be a part of normal bereavement or mourning. However, if they persist for a long time, or interfere with everyday functioning, it may help to seek professional advice and counseling.

#### **Some signs of depression in children include:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Persistent sad or irritable mood      | • Lacks interest in playing with friends, bored                 |
| • Loss of interest in usual activities  | • Poor school performance                                       |
| • Changes in appetite or weight         | • Unexplained irritability; crying; complaining                 |
| • Feeling worthless or unloved          | • Increased anger, hostility or irritability                    |
| • Repeated thoughts of suicide or death | • Extreme sensitivity to failure or rejection                   |
| • Difficulty concentrating              | • Frequent, non-specific physical complaints                    |
| • Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping   | • Difficulties in personal relationships with family or friends |
| • Loss of energy                        |   |

### **JOINT ACTIVITY: Positive Coping Ideas**

Together, complete the activity on the next page. Focusing on the things you did not lose is a positive way of coping with sadness and loss. Your child may need help because some things can be hard to name or draw (e.g., loss of sense of safety). When your child is finished, discuss some positive things your child can do to feel better.





## Coping with Loss and Sadness- What You Can Do



Many people have had feelings of sadness and loss since the terrorist attacks. In the space below, write down or draw a picture of some of the things you lost because of the attacks. Some things may not be easy to name and may not be something that you can see or touch, such as you do not “feel safe” anymore. Write these down too.

1. Write or draw a picture of some of the things you lost because of the terrorist attacks. (If you lost nothing, draw or write about things other people lost.)

2. What are some of the things you did not lose because of the terrorist attacks? Draw or write about some of the positive things you still have. For example, you can write: “I may have lost some things because of the attacks, but I still have....”

## Common Questions and Answers

### *My child is worried about another terrorist attack. What should I say?*

Be honest with your child, but also be reassuring. Tell your child something like this:

*“Being scared of another terrorist attack is normal. Many people are nervous because another attack may happen. However, everyone is working very hard to keep you, your family and your friends safe. People like the President and other leaders, the military, the police, fire department, FBI, CIA, Coast Guard, etc. They are all working together to stop another attack.”*

You might also point out that the military conflict (our attack on the terrorists) is very far away. You can also say that the President has asked all of us to be brave and go about our usual activities. The President feels safe and is doing all of his usual activities, too.

Children are reassured by hearing that family members love them and will do everything they can to keep them safe. Older children also may appreciate discussions of the specific steps that have been taken to improve security in places like airports, public buildings, schools and sports stadiums.

*(Adapted from the National Association of School Psychologists; [www.nasponline.org/NEAT/children\\_war.html](http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/children_war.html))*

### *What should I do if there is a terrorist threat in my area?*

First, create a Family Disaster Plan. Some ideas for how to do this can be found on P. xx. Decide in advance where you will obtain reliable information – make sure you receive news and other information from reputable sources. Then, **be alert, be prepared** to follow your disaster plan, but **go on with your life**. Do not stop your normal routines or daily activities.

### *My child is nervous about flying on an airplane. What can I do?*

Before a flight, talk to your child about safety issues. Let them express their feelings and fears. Tell your child that you understand why they are nervous about flying on an airplane. Point out that you would not go on an airplane yourself if you didn't think it was safe. Reassure your child about all the extra steps that have been taken to keep travelers safe, such as extra security. Another good idea is to bring relaxing and distracting activities for your child to do during travel, such as a favorite toy or doll, portable CD player, book, deck of cards, or hand-held video game player. This will help them feel more secure. You can also get ideas from the activities in other sections of this book such as “How Does Your Child Cope” (Page 14) and “Fear and Worries” (Page 22). The relaxation exercise on the next page may also help.

### *How can I help my child feel less nervous when I'm on a business trip?*

If you travel for work, stay in closer touch with family members. You can do this by calling home or sending e-mails on a frequent basis. If you can, choose a specific time to call or send an e-mail each day you are away. Make sure your child has a phone number to reach you if they get scared or worried. Also, encourage your child to stay active with lots of activities. You might give your child a project to finish before you get back, such as drawing a poster or completing a list of chores. When you return, spend some extra time with your child and do some fun activities together.

## **How can I teach my child to relax?**

### ***Use the Turtle Technique***

Talk to your child about what turtles do when they feel scared. Tell your child that turtles go into their shells to calm down. Say that he or she can also create a shell to relax in when feeling mad, scared or stressed. Your child can create a shell by doing any of the following: putting his or her head down, going to a quiet corner or a separate room, or just closing his or her eyes.

Once your child is in his or her shell, it is important to relax. Here are some things that can help:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position, with feet flat on the floor.
- 2) Take a couple of deep breaths; feel your stomach go in and out like a balloon
- 3) Count to ten or twenty very slowly.
- 4) Imagine something you really enjoy, such as sitting on the beach in the sun, or floating on water, or some other positive, calm image.
- 5) Remind your child that he or she can practice this before going to sleep or when nervous or scared.

## **How can I tell when to seek professional help for my child?**

It is a good idea to seek the help of a mental health professional when either:

- Your child has a number of stress reactions (see Page 12) that don't seem to be getting better or going away after a few months.

OR

- Your child is so bothered by the terrorist attacks, related events or worries about future attacks that he or she is having a very hard time in school, at home or with friends.

\* This advice applies to adults as well. If your stress reactions persist or interfere with your everyday functioning, you should seek professional help.

## **How can I find professional help for my child, myself, or another family member?**

You should look for a mental health professional such as a psychologist, a social worker, a counselor or a psychiatrist. If your child needs help when they are in school, a school counselor or psychologist can assist, and can also provide a recommendation if they feel your child needs further help. A member of your local clergy also may be someone to talk to, and can assist in finding appropriate help.

If you or your child needs help right away, you can check the government listings of your local phone book for "mental health crisis hotlines" and call the help number. You can also contact the American Psychological Association at **1-800-964-2000**. The operator will use your ZIP code to locate and connect you with an appropriate referral source in your area.

## **What should I tell my child about the reasons for the terrorist attacks?**

Many children want to know why the terrorists attacked the United States and why they dislike Americans. These are not easy questions to answer. Many people have their own beliefs and feelings about the attacks and the reasons behind them. Only the terrorists really know the answers to these questions. What we can give you are some “talking points” to use with your child. These are suggestions; it is up to you to decide how you want to discuss these questions with your child.

### **Why don't the terrorists like Americans or the United States?**

- They do not like our way of life because it is very different from theirs.
- The United States was built on freedom and democracy, and since the terrorists do not like these ideas or our way of life, they do not like Americans or the United States.
- The terrorists do not believe that women should be free and take part in government, business or society.

### **Why did the terrorists do this?**

- You can explain to your child that most people accept or at least tolerate differences.
- The terrorists do not accept or tolerate people who are different from themselves, and do not choose to solve their conflicts peacefully.
- The terrorists are “extremists.” They use extreme methods, such as violence and terrorism, to hurt those whom they do not like or who are different from them.
- The terrorists thought that by attacking the United States, we would change the way we live and become more like them. They were very wrong.

### **Why did we go to war?**

- The people who did the bad things must be stopped.
- We have gone to war against the terrorists to make sure that another attack like September 11 does not happen again.
- We must punish the people who committed these acts. Just like a criminal who goes to jail for a crime, the terrorists must be punished for their crimes and for hurting so many people.
- It may help to explain that the September 11 attacks were not the first time the terrorists had attacked Americans (e.g. bombing of the USS Cole or the U.S. embassies in Africa).

## **How can I help?**

Every person has unique talents or things they are good at doing. Think about the things you do best. Then, think of a creative way to use your talents to help others and support America. Helping comes in many ways and forms. You should do what you can, but stay within your limits. If you cannot help financially, find another way, such as writing letters of support or volunteering your time. Helping others can help you and your child cope with your feelings as well.

### **My child and I want to do something to help those in need. What can we do?**

Contact an agency that is working with those personally affected by the attacks to find out what their current needs are and how you may best be able to assist. The needs of families change over time, but many continue to need support. Children and adults can help by donating money, goods or services; volunteering their time; or sending drawings or letters of support to the families.

## **How can I help fight terrorism and support America's troops overseas?**

By simply going to work or school, and continuing your normal activities, you are helping America fight against terrorism. You can also help by showing support for our country and our military by:

- Displaying the American flag or yellow ribbons in front of your house or on your cars.
- Wearing "patriotic" T-shirts, pins and hats expressing support for our country and military.
- Writing letters of support to your local military offices, police and fire departments and Congressional representatives, thanking them for their assistance in fighting terrorism.

## ***What should I know about bioterrorism and anthrax?***

Many parents have expressed concerns about anthrax and bioterrorist attacks. The American Academy of Pediatrics website has a helpful section that addresses frequently asked questions on these topics at [www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/anthraxqa.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/anthraxqa.htm). Also, check out the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). The information below is adapted from these websites.

### **What is a bioterrorist attack?**

A bioterrorist attack is defined as a terrorist attack with the use of biological agents. Given the anthrax attacks of last fall, it is a good idea to have a better understanding of some of the agents bioterrorists may use, including anthrax.

### **What is anthrax?**

Anthrax is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*. It is a disease that occurs naturally in hoofed animals such as sheep or goats, though humans can contract the disease.

### **What is the difference between cutaneous and inhalation anthrax?**

In both cases, the infection is caused by the same bacteria – the difference depends on how the victim was exposed. Cutaneous anthrax is the most common form of anthrax. Cutaneous anthrax is an infection of the skin that occurs when the bacteria contacts a skin cut or abrasion. Cutaneous anthrax is rarely fatal. In very rare cases, people can become infected with inhalation anthrax. Inhalation anthrax develops when anthrax spores enter the lungs. It is a very dangerous form of anthrax that can be fatal if not treated quickly.

### **How do you treat anthrax?**

Anthrax can be treated with antibiotics. The key to treating anthrax is to get help as quickly as possible. If you feel you have been exposed to anthrax, contact your doctor immediately.

### **Is anthrax contagious?**

No. Anthrax is a disease caused by bacteria - it cannot be transmitted from person to person.

### **I have received a suspicious package, what should I do?**

DO NOT open the letter or package. First, isolate the package and keep others away from the area. If possible, seal the package in a plastic bag. Make sure you wash your hands with soap and water immediately. Then, notify local law enforcement and evacuate the area. It is a good idea to collect a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of everyone who came in contact with the package. As soon as possible, take a shower with soap and water.



## ***What can I do to commemorate the anniversary?***

Everyone has their own ways of coping with a situation. Some people will choose to not do anything special – this is okay. For some, commemorating the anniversary of the terrorist attacks and honoring those who were killed is something they feel they should do. There are many ways to commemorate the anniversary of the attacks. Below are a few suggestions:

### *For Schools:*

- Hold an Essay or drawing contest (theme can be patriotic)
- Dedicate a plaque (in memory of 9/11)
- Invite a local firefighter or police officer to speak at the school
- Write thank you letters to the military and local police and fire departments
- Hold donation drive to help victim's families or local charities
- Paint mural on school wall
- Create special lesson plans the week of the anniversary (different activity each day)

### *For families:*

- Build your own memorial
- Hold a candlelight vigil
- Plant a tree or flower
- Donate to charity
- Wear a pin or ribbon as a tribute
- Fly the American flag on your car or house
- Spend time together – do a fun, family activity outside the house (park, beach, etc.)

### *For communities:*

- Hold a contest in schools or the community to pick a design for a memorial
- Plan a community ceremony
- Create a memorial (statue, mural, etc.)
- Plant trees or flowers
- Dedicate a park, street, building, etc. after someone killed in the attacks

## ***Should my child participate in a commemorative event?***

Many communities, schools and organizations are planning ceremonies and/or memorials to commemorate the anniversary of the attacks. It is a good idea to include your child in any ceremony or commemoration marking the anniversary of the attacks. Many children and adults welcome the opportunity to express their feelings in a supportive manner. It will not harm your child to participate. In fact, it may even be helpful for your child to feel included and do something to honor the victims of the attack. If you do not plan to go to a community event, you may wish to hold a short, private ceremony at home.

# FAMILY DISASTER PLAN

A disaster is a large, damaging event that can cause great destruction and death. Some disasters are caused by forces of nature that mankind cannot control – these are known as natural disasters. A natural disaster can be caused by an event such as a hurricane, tornado, earthquake or flood. Some disasters are human-made, but can be just as deadly as a natural disaster. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks are an example of a human-made disaster where over 3,000 people lost their lives and many buildings were damaged or destroyed. Many disasters, particularly those caused by a terrorist attack, can occur without warning. Being prepared and knowing what to do if a disaster occurs can save you and your family’s life. This will also help your child cope with fears or worries he or she may have about safety or getting separated during a disaster.

**Create a family disaster plan.** First, obtain information on how to prepare for disasters that may occur in your area. You can contact your local emergency management office for this information. Then, hold a family meeting and develop your family’s disaster plan. Make sure that everyone knows *what to do*, *where to go*, and *who to call* in the event a disaster occurs. Practice or review your plan every six months.

When creating your plan, identify escape routes from your home, office and school, choosing designated areas outside each location where you and your family will meet. Select a responsible out-of-state relative or friend as a point of contact for your family in case you get separated - make sure everyone knows at least two ways to contact that person (telephone, email, etc.). And don’t forget to plan for your pets as well - if you are told to evacuate, you will not be able to bring your pet to a shelter.

**Create a disaster supply kit.** Remember to store these items in a dry, accessible place in your house. Make sure you have enough supplies to last at least three days.

### Disaster Supply Kit Checklist

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight (1 per person) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet care items      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra batteries           | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio (battery operated) | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys, books, games  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit             | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-perishable food      | <input type="checkbox"/> Moisture wipes      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra medication          | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets, pillows        | <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water (1g/person/day)     | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra set of keys        | <input type="checkbox"/> Important documents |

**Create an emergency contact card** for each member of your family. Place this card next to your home telephone, and keep a copy in your wallet, purse or child’s book bag. Make sure your child knows how and when to dial 911.

### Emergency Contact Card

Name:  
Home Number:  
Address:  
Family Meeting Place:  
Parent/Guardian: Parent/Guardian:  
Work Number: Work Number:  
Outside of Area Contact:  
Name:  
Phone:  
Address: