

TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2015

Paris terror attacks: How to help with child anxiety

The tragic events that unfolded in Paris over the weekend will be fuelling fear and anxiety in adults and children alike. Australia's only free, private and confidential 24/7 telephone and online counselling for children and young people is reminding young people and their families to look for warning signs of increased anxiety.

Children absorb tension, confusion and fear, and national youth counselling service Kids Helpline, is on hand to help those who are feeling increased anxiety.

Kids Helpline General Manager Wendy Protheroe explained while it's normal to feel anxiety and sadness for the terror victims and their families, for some children, ongoing media coverage can lead to more significant feelings of anxiety, worry and sadness.

"The 24 hour news cycle means it is almost impossible to shield young people from coverage on television, in newspapers, on the internet and in social media," Ms Protheroe said.

"Young people will inevitably react in different ways and to different extents. We need to be mindful that what may not worry one person, can cause great concern in another."

If media reports from France have caused young people to become anxious or afraid, it can impact on behaviour including sleep problems and nightmares, becoming short tempered and more tired than usual and worrying more than usual about family and loved ones.

Kids Helpline counsellors advise the following tips for helping young people affected:

- Limit media access – while it can be good to learn about the world and current affairs, it is not good for anyone, particularly children, to keep watching frightening vision over again.
- Encourage young people to talk to people they trust about how they are feeling.
- Ask questions – often the more you understand about what has happened, the easier it is to start feeling okay again.
- Spend time with people who make you feel safe - extra hugs can help.
- Do something physical, it can help you soothe some of your feelings, especially angry ones.
- Do some things that make you feel happy and relaxed - what's your favourite thing to do when you need to have fun?
- The most important thing is to talk to adults that you trust about your feelings, so people around you know what is happening for you.
- Do something for the people affected by the tragedy. What about writing a note of support to people affected?

If you would like to talk some more about things in the news that have worried you, or anything at all, you can contact Kids Helpline, Australia's only national 24/7 counselling and support service for children and young people on free call 1800 55 1800 or via email or web counselling services at www.kidshelp.com.au

ENDS

INTERVIEW/PHOTO/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

- Wendy Protheroe, General Manager Kids Helpline



media release



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