



Fears and Worries - What You Can Do

After a traumatic event, children and adults may feel more fearful and worried. This is especially true with events that are unpredictable, such as terrorist attacks. Since September 11, many children and adults have fears and worries about their personal safety or the safety of loved ones. It will be useful to understand the kinds of things your child worries about. This will enable you to help your child cope with fears and worries. It will also help you to reassure your child. It is a good idea to repeat this section later on, as the focus of your child’s worries may change over time.

Keep in mind that fears and worries can be learned through television and other media sources. Because of this, we have included an activity to reduce media use (see Pages 20-21). You might also find a relaxation exercise useful (see Page 35). In addition, be careful to monitor what you say to other adults about your worries when your child may be listening, as this can communicate new worries and concerns to your child.



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, and that you might unintentionally communicate to your child. The terrorist attacks have brought about a whole new set of fears and worries that may not have been present before September 11. On a sheet of paper, write down the fears or worries you currently have (resulting from the terrorist attacks). Use the following categories as a guide:

Work
Travel

Family
Health

Friends
Children

World
Other

JOINT ACTIVITY: Develop a “Worry Buster” Plan

Along with your child, develop a “Worry Buster” plan. Use a separate sheet of paper. For each “worry” that you and your child have listed in the “worry” activities, develop a coping plan to deal with that worry. For 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:

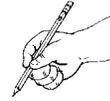
Create an index card for your child to carry with emergency phone numbers to reach the parent. Give a copy to the teacher and school.



Worry	Worry Buster



Fears and Worries - What You Can Do



It is important that you talk with a parent or other adult about some of the worries or fears you have about different things. 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. In each section below, list some of your worries or fears that bother you.

<p style="text-align: center;">SCHOOL</p>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;">FRIENDS & FAMILY</p>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 <p style="text-align: center;">WORLD</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;">TRAVEL</p>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 <p style="text-align: center;">HEALTH</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p style="text-align: center;">PETS</p>  <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Other Concerns</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	



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 be helpful 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).

Another way to help stop intrusive thoughts is to encourage 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 the 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 the terrorist attacks. 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.

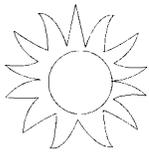
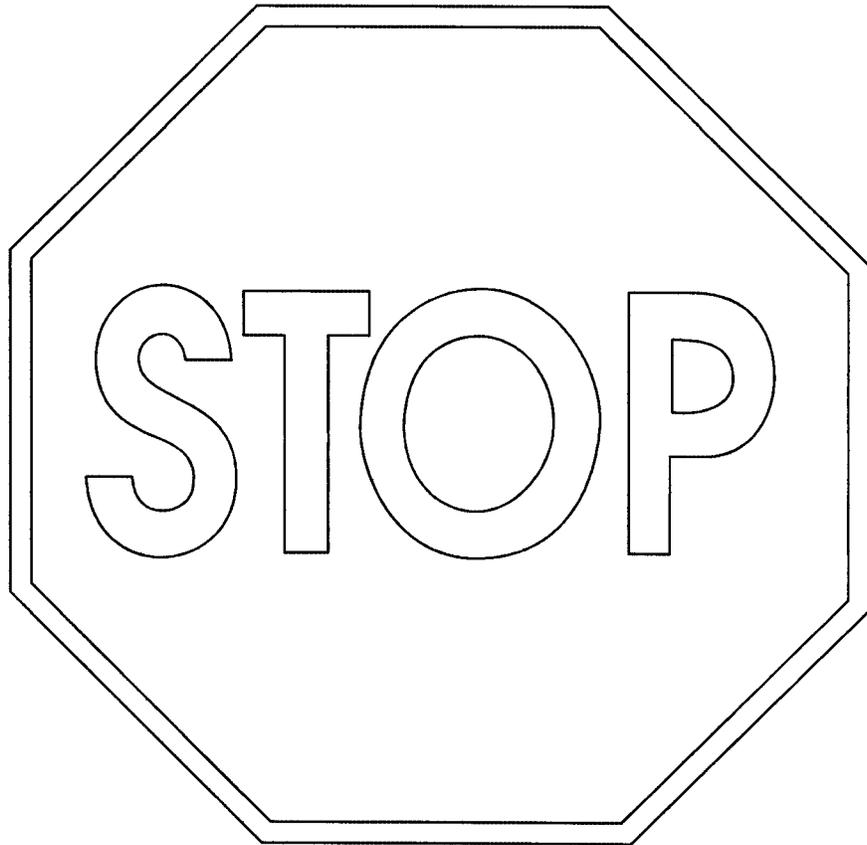
Together, complete the next page. You may want to photocopy the page before you work on it so your child will be able to carry a copy with them. On the top half of the page is a STOP sign. Let your child color it in. On the bottom half is a space for you and your child to write down **OTHER** things 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.

DAYTIME	NIGHT-TIME or BEDTIME
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 35)
Hug a parent	Draw a picture
Sing or hum a song	Have parent “tuck” you into bed

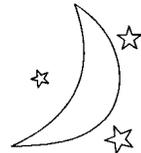
(Adapted from Robin Gurwitch, Ph.D., University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center)



When You Have Bad Thoughts and Dreams:



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



DAYTIME

NIGHT-TIME or BEDTIME



Managing Anger - What You Can Do

It is not unusual for children and adults to have angry or irritable feelings after a disaster or 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 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 about your child’s behavior over the next week or two. Take notes on what happens before, during and after each angry outburst. Use this information 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.

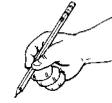
Also, look at what happens after your child gets angry. Does your child get his or her way? Try not to ignore the angry behavior or give in to your child’s misbehavior. Instead, calmly tell them that “feeling angry” is okay, but “acting angry” is not. Have your child sit quietly until they calm down 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.

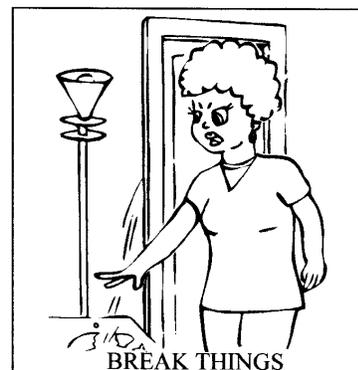
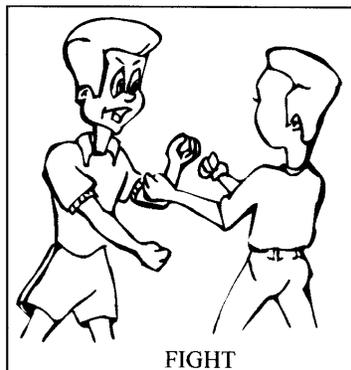
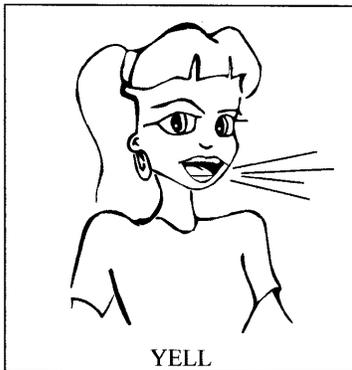
Sometimes you may feel angry with your family, teachers, friends or classmates. If you are upset and angry with someone, or get into an argument, here are a few steps to remember that will help you solve a problem without violence:

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 parent) 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 colors should be respected and treated fairly, even if they seem “different.”

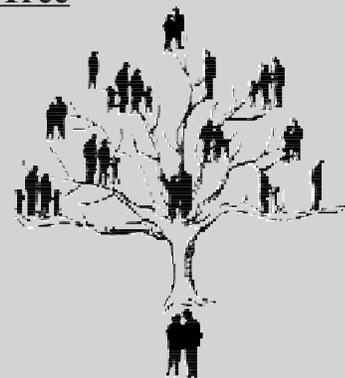
The term “Arab-American” is used to identify Americans who can trace their ancestry to, or who immigrated from, Arabic-speaking areas of the Middle East. This can include individuals from a number of countries, religions, cultures and ethnic backgrounds. To many Americans, Arabic customs, beliefs and 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. The recent terrorist attacks also can increase 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, many 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 the terrorists; that is their job. It is your job to be a good American and be accepting of others.

Complete the activity below:

OUTSIDE	INSIDE
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.
MAKE A NEW FRIEND Find someone in your school or neighborhood you do not know.	
OUTSIDE	INSIDE
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 report feeling this way.

Some children and adults feel very sad because they lost family members, co-workers or friends in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon or in a hijacked plane. Most people did not lose family members or friends, but they still feel sad.

There are many reasons why people feel sad. Sometimes it is because they feel badly for the people who lost family members and friends. Sometimes it is because they don't know what to do to help the situation. Sometimes it is because things "just don't seem the same" since the terrorist attacks. The attacks have changed our "usual way of life."

The activity in this section will help you and your child identify and talk about feelings of sadness. It will also identify things to do that will help your child to cope with sadness and loss.

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 (e.g., writing letters, volunteering, donating money; see Page 39 of the *Questions and Answers* for some ideas)

JOINT ACTIVITY: Positive Coping Ideas

Together with your child, complete the activity on the next page about "losses" and the things they "still have." Focusing on the things they did not lose is a positive way of coping with sadness and loss. Your child may need help with this activity, because some of the things can be hard to name or draw (e.g., loss of sense of safety). Once your child is finished, discuss the answers. Point out that it hurts to lose something important. Also, talk about some positive things your child can do to feel better (see above suggestions).

