



How you can support your child during bombing?

Tips:

- Try to remain as positive as possible. Children read in your behavior what is going on. You do not always have to remain 'strong'; you are already doing the best you can. Engage in self-care, self-compassion, and express positive emotions.
- Hug your children if they want and allow children to 'nestle in' on your lap.
- Sing together childhood songs. It gives a sense of security.
- Avoid open conflict and confrontation among friends and family.
- Accept the way your child feels whatever emotions they show.
- The more you obtain support from others, the better you will be able to help your kids.
- Pray together with your child if you believe in a god or spirituality.
- Do not encourage feelings of anger or revenge in your children. This would only increase anxiety in your child(ren).
- For adolescents, ensure to balance between treating them as adults (telling the truth, sharing your thoughts with them, giving responsibility) but also allowing them to ask for support.

Ways to reduce stress:

- Breathing exercises:
 - Smelling flowers: Tell your child to imagine they are smelling a flower, breathing in deeply through the nose and out through the mouth. They can also imagine the flowers in their head.
 - The little bunny: Just like a bunny in the garden, encourage your child to take three quick sniffs in through the nose, and one long exhale out through the mouth.
 - Stress ball: Make your own stress ball by filling cloth, plastic bags or balloons with dry lentils or rice. Squeeze the ball when feeling stressed to release muscle tension.
- Positive imagination exercises:
 - Imagine a safe space together, wherever this may be. Let your child express what they see and feel in this place.

- Remind your child about positive past experiences, family and friends.

As much as possible:

- Try to ensure that basic needs are met (food, drink, clothes, nappies, toileting)
- Try to build up a daily routine. Daily routines provide stability and reassurance that at least something is constant and under control
- Avoid exposing children to graphic or audio details: in real life, on TV, on radio or on your phone.
- Try to avoid directing your child to feel a certain feeling. Some might be very reserved and quiet during attacks while some may be angry. Validate and accept their feelings

Physical safety guidelines:

- Show your child how to cover themselves when there is a bombing nearby: lay down on the stomach, cover ears and slightly open the mouth.
- If there is no shelter available, it is better to stand in the staircase of a building and stay away from windows
- Remind your child to avoid touching unknown items or ruins after the bombing to avoid interaction with explosives.
- Practice with your child: What do we do when there is active bombing? What do we do after? If there is a shelter available, practice running to the shelter. Making a routine out of the bombing can significantly reduce stress and provide your child with some sense of control.
- Have an 'emergency run-bag' of basic supplies that you can take with you when you move to a shelter or cellar. Include a few small toys in the bag, along with food, drink, nappies, spare clothes, phone, documents etc.

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