

Mental Health and Wellness Newsletter

How to Talk to Your Children about the Paris Attacks

After the deadly attacks in France earlier in November, parents around the world are grappling with questions of how much to share with children and how to talk about the violence. In an interview with The Associated Press, Dr. Steven Berkowitz, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the University of Pennsylvania, offered this advice:

Do's:

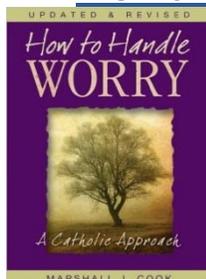
- If children younger than 6 hear of the attacks, tell them that it's something adults will take care of and that they're safe.
- Watch or read the news with older children and ask them open-ended questions about their thoughts.
- If teenagers won't open up, ask them what their peers are saying about the news.
- Explain that although we hear about events like this, they're still relatively rare.
- For younger children, explain that there are people who do bad things and sometimes there's no good explanation why.

Don'ts:

- Don't let children younger than 6 watch TV coverage. Repeated coverage can make them think it's happening over and over again.
- Don't pass your anxiety on to your children; instead talk about your worries with other adults.
- Don't offer an answer you don't believe; it's OK to say it was a horrific event and everyone is stunned.
- Don't hesitate to correct children's misconceptions about the news; explain, for example, that no one religion or its believers are responsible for acts of violence.
- Don't be surprised if children don't react as strongly as adults; many children have grown up surrounded by coverage of violent events. (Click for full article:

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2343556/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-the-paris-attacks/>)

Mental Health and Wellness – Book



How to Handle Worry: A Catholic Approach: In this book, author, Marshall Cook offers practical suggestions for dealing with worries and banishing anxieties. He explores strategies for creating and maintaining harmony by drawing on our faith and bringing our burdens to God in prayer. With humour and insight, Marshall brings a faith perspective to managing stress.

Stress, Depression and the Holidays: Tips for Coping



The Christmas season may bring unwelcome guests—stress and depression. It's no wonder with the dizzying array of demands – parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few. These practical tips can minimize the stress that accompanies the Christmas season:

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings.
- **Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits.
- **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones.
- **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all your expectations.
- **Stick to a budget or try these alternatives:** Donate to charity in someone's name, give homemade gifts, start a family gift exchange.
- **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends, and other activities.
- **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.
- **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Try these suggestions: Have a healthy snack before holiday parties; get plenty of sleep; incorporate regular physical activity into each day.
- **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you.

Source: Mayo Clinic – Stress Management