

# Talking About Paris and Terrorism

As we are still processing the awful attacks in Paris, it is important to be open and to communicate with friends, coworkers and family about the terroristic events. It is important that we understand the feelings and thoughts of others surrounding the events, in addition to our own.

Terrorism is a largely psychological weapon that is used to instill fear in people all over the world. It is human nature to worry about when it will happen, where it will happen, and who it will happen to next. Holding in these thoughts, worry and concerns can lead to increased anxiety, depression and stress.

It is also important to talk to your children and teens about the events. Use these moments to teach your children and family appropriate coping skills and model behaviors.

## **DO:**

- Assure your children that they are safe. Be supportive and available to them to talk.
- Let younger children know that adults are taking care of everyone and everything.
- Limit screen time that may be disturbing and upsetting. Watch or read the news with older children (mature adolescents and teens).
- Ask your older children open-ended questions about their thoughts. If they do not want to open up, ask them what their peers are saying about the events. They may not open up right away, but when they do, be available. Listen to them.
- Explain that these events are rare, despite hearing and seeing a lot of bad things.
- For younger children, explain that there are people who do bad things and sometimes there is no good explanation as to why.
- Take time for yourself to relax and *limit your own screen time*. Try reading, meditation, yoga, exercise, cooking or walking the dog to get your mind elsewhere.

## **DON'T:**

- Don't let children younger than 6 watch TV coverage. Repeated coverage may make them think it is happening over and over again.
- Don't pass your anxiety on to your children; instead, talk to other adults about your worries. Confide in a spouse, close friend or trusted coworker. Seek counseling if needed to address your concerns.
- Don't offer your children an answer you don't believe; they will see right through it. It is OK to say it was a terrible event and everyone is shocked and upset.
- Don't hesitate to correct misconceptions or mixed-up information. Give them correct information that we know to be true – not theories, probable information or guesses.
- Don't change your daily habits and routines. Live your life just as you would if nothing had happened. If you avoid large crowds, big cities, flying, sporting events, etc., you will become more anxious the more you avoid it.