

# PARENT GUIDE

## What this video teaches

This episode introduces children to simple, protective skills for handling scary or stressful events in their community or in the world:

- How to ask, “Are we safe?”
- Why it helps to talk to a trusted grown-up
- How too much scary news can make the brain feel overwhelmed
- Why taking breaks from upsetting media is healthy
- That families and communities help each other through hard times

It helps children understand that scary events can bring up big feelings, but they do not have to carry those feelings alone.

---

## Before Watching (ages 6–9)

Ask:

- “Have you ever heard people talking about something scary on the news?”
- “How does your body feel when something seems scary or confusing?”
- “Who helps you feel safe when you’re worried?”

Keep it calm and simple.

---

## During Watching

Point out:

- Sam asking if the family is safe
- Mom turning off the TV
- The idea of taking a break from scary news
- The trusted team of grown-ups and helpers

You can quietly say:



“Talking about worries helps them feel smaller.”

“Grown-ups help kids feel safe.”

---

## After Watching

Discuss:

- “What made Sam feel worried?”
- “What did Mom do that helped?”
- “What can you do if you see something scary or confusing?”
- “Who are the people you can talk to?”

Then try together:

Have your child name:

- 1 grown-up at home
- 2 other trusted helpers
- 3 things that help them feel calm

Write or draw them.

---

## Optional Family Activity – Build a Safety Circle

Draw a circle with your child in the middle.

Add:

- Home helper(s)
- School helper(s)
- Community helper(s)
- Calm-down tools

Examples of calm-down tools:

- hugging a parent
- reading



- taking a walk
- coloring
- turning off the screen
- taking deep breaths

Explain:

“These are the people and tools you can use when something feels big.”

---

## For Older Kids (10–12)

Expand the conversation:

- How kids this age may hear about scary events from friends, YouTube, games, or social media
- Why seeing the same upsetting images over and over can make stress feel bigger
- The difference between being informed and being overloaded
- How to notice when their body feels activated: fast heartbeat, stomach ache, trouble sleeping, irritability
- Why asking questions is smarter than filling in the blanks with fear
- How doing something small (like helping a neighbor, participating in a school or community project, or joining something like an Earth Day clean-up) can help them feel more in control and less overwhelmed

Sometimes when something feels big or scary, taking a small positive action can help kids feel steadier and more confident.

Practice phrases:

“I heard something scary and I want to ask about it.”

“Are we safe?”

“Can we talk about what happened?”

“I think I need a break from this.”

You can also begin talking about this idea:

“Just because something is on a screen doesn’t mean you need to keep watching it.”

---

## For Teens (13+)



## Applying the same tools at an older age

For teens, the tools are the same — they just look more grown-up.

This stage of life often brings:

- more exposure to constant news and social media
- greater awareness of violence, disasters, and instability
- stronger emotional reactions to injustice, danger, or uncertainty
- more independence online without adults always present
- more pressure to “act fine” even when they feel unsettled

That’s why these tools matter even more now.

Teens may not always say “I’m scared.”

Instead, it may come out as anger, sarcasm, withdrawal, doomscrolling, numbness, or acting like they don’t care.

---

### 1) Ask direct questions (instead of sitting alone with fear)

Explain:

“When something feels scary or confusing, asking clear questions helps your brain organize what’s real.”

Examples:

- “Is this happening near us?”
- “Are we okay?”
- “What’s actually true here?”
- “Do I need to keep watching this?”

Purpose: clarity lowers panic.

---

### 2) Limit repeated exposure (especially doomscrolling)

You might say:



“Being informed is healthy. Flooding your brain with upsetting content usually isn’t.”

Examples:

- taking a break from TikTok or reels after seeing upsetting content
- not watching graphic clips repeatedly
- muting or limiting accounts that keep feeding fear
- choosing one trusted source instead of endless scrolling

Purpose: reduce emotional overload.

---

### **3) Build your support team**

Help them name:

- one adult at home
- one adult outside the home
- one peer who helps them feel grounded

You can say:

“When life feels unstable, connection is protection.”

Purpose: support reduces isolation.

---

### **4) Name the feeling + ask for help early**

Frame it as normal:

“Stress gets easier to manage when you talk about it early.”

Examples teens can use:

- “I can’t stop thinking about this.”
- “I feel on edge.”
- “This is messing with my head.”
- “I think I need help calming down.”
- “Can we talk later tonight?”



Purpose: early support prevents overwhelm.

---

## **5) Turn concern into action**

Teens often feel a strong emotional response to what's happening in the world—and that usually means they care.

You can say:

“Feeling upset about something is often a sign that it matters to you.”

Help them channel that feeling into something constructive.

Examples:

- participating in a local clean-up or community event (like Earth Day initiatives)
- helping others in small, direct ways
- getting involved in school or community efforts
- supporting causes they care about in simple, manageable ways

Purpose: action helps reduce feelings of helplessness and builds a sense of control and purpose.

You can reinforce:

“You don’t have to fix everything. Even small actions can make a difference—and help you feel better.”

---

## **Helping parents evaluate how their child is handling stressful events over time**

As kids grow, their reactions may change — and that’s normal.

What matters most is noticing whether the stress is passing through, or starting to take over.

---

## **Signs your child may need more support**



Look for changes such as:

- trouble sleeping
- appetite changes
- increased clinginess
- irritability or anger
- avoiding school or activities
- pulling away from friends
- loss of interest in things they usually enjoy
- repeated worries about safety

These warning signs were specifically discussed in the episode, especially changes in sleep, appetite, isolation, and pulling away from enjoyable activities.

---

## **How to stay involved without overwhelming them**

You can stay connected by:

- asking calm, open questions
- listening before explaining
- correcting misunderstandings gently
- reassuring without dismissing
- limiting media exposure without shame or panic

You can say:

“You’re not wrong for feeling upset.”

“Let’s figure this out together.”

“You do not have to carry this by yourself.”

---

## **Teaching kids and teens what healthy reassurance sounds like**

You can say:

“Yes, something hard happened.”

“Yes, it can feel scary.”



“Yes, we can talk about it.”

“And right now, here is what is being done to keep people safe.”

This matters because the episode made clear that kids should not be left alone to make sense of frightening events, and that honest, steady communication is more helpful than pretending nothing happened.

---

## Final message for parents

You are not trying to erase every fear.

You are teaching your child how to:

- ask questions
- notice when their brain and body feel overloaded
- take breaks from upsetting input
- reach out to safe people
- stay connected during hard times
- take small, positive actions when they feel ready

That’s resilience.

