



# **SELF-HELP KIT FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS**

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# HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN IN A WAR ZONE / 1



## USE SIMPLE SHORT WORDS.

For example: "I know this is hard.  
I know this is scary. We hope for peace soon.  
But I'm here. We are together.  
I am here for you."



## TALK ABOUT HOW YOU ARE PROTECTING THE CHILD.

For example: "We are going to a safer place.  
We are taking the (car, bus, train, etc.).  
Hold my hand tightly."



## TAKE A PHYSICAL OBJECT (FOR GROUNDING) WITH YOU FOR THE CHILD.

This could be a photo, card, blanket, or a small toy.  
It could even be something you find such as a rock  
or a piece of string along the way  
that you give meaning to.



## MAINTAIN COMFORTING PHYSICAL TOUCH WITH THE CHILD.

As much as possible, hold hands,  
give each other back rubs, hugs,  
and high fives.



## MAKE SURE TO EAT AND DRINK.

Try to stay hydrated.  
Remember to eat.



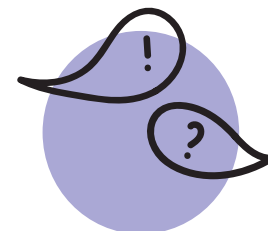
## CREATE A SIMPLE ROUTINE WITH THE CHILD.

Create a new routine with the child.  
It could be a smile, song, special handshake,  
or high five.



## CREATE A COCOON OR HOLDING SPACE FOR THE CHILD.

If you hear shooting or explosions,  
get to a safe place and wrap the child  
with either your body or a blanket. If possible  
keep warm drinks or snacks nearby.



## USE SIMPLE PHRASES.

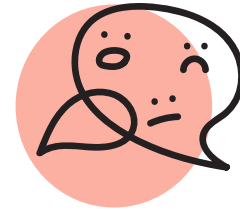
If you need to take action remember:  
Look. Hands. Go. Do not expect the child  
to follow instructions. Be sure to look both ways.  
Hold the child's hands. Then move.

# HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN IN A WAR ZONE / 2



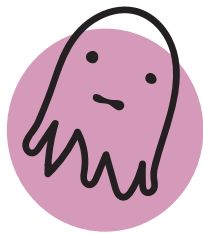
## **IF POSSIBLE, MOVE.**

Stretch, breathe, walk, and wiggle your hands.



## **SPEAK THE TRUTH. TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.**

If children ask questions, “why is this happening,” or makes statements, “I hate the enemy,” talk about what they are feeling. Do not lie or make up stories about what is happening. Validate their fears/concerns and yours by sharing with a comforting reminder that everything will be okay.



## **DO NOT BE AFRAID OF YOUR EMOTIONS.**

Do not be afraid of feelings you or the child may be experiencing. It is important to experience the emotions fully. Experience and express your feelings together with the child.



## **TAKE TIME TO PLAY.**

When it is safe to do so, play hide and seek, do something creative, play tag, imaginary games, “I Spy,” Simon Says, sing songs, etc.



## **REGRESSION IS NORMAL.**

When children are under stress or experience change, they may act younger than their current age. Toileting accidents may occur. This is normal and temporary.



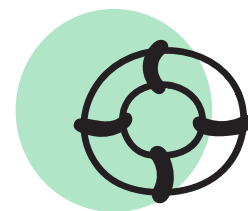
## **NO PLACE FOR SHAME OR BLAME.**

Use positive self-talk. You are doing your best with your situation. Try this meditation: I am strong. I am brave. I am a good (parent, uncle, aunt, brother, etc.). I am doing my best.



## **EMERGENCY CONTACTS.**

Write your phone numbers on your child’s clothes, hand, and put a note with important contacts in their backpack, pocket, or on a name tag.



## **PRACTICE SELF-CARE. ASK FOR HELP.**

Make sure you are taking care of your needs as well. Ask for help from people. Give yourself breaks when possible. Remember it is important to take time to relax.

# HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN OUTSIDE A WAR ZONE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS



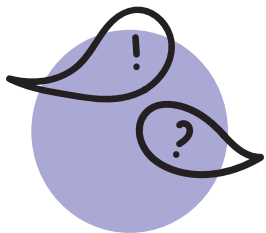
## **TALK ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING.**

Do not hide information from children.  
Be open, warm, and caring when talking  
to children about what is going on.



## **USE SIMPLE SHORT WORDS.**

When talking to children be brief and sincere.  
For example: "I know this is hard. I know this is scary.  
We hope for peace soon. But I'm here.  
We are together. I am here for you."



## **ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.**

Tell the child they can come  
to you with anything.



**TELL THE CHILD: "YOU HAVE NOTHING  
TO DO WITH THE WAR. YOU DID NOT CAUSE  
THIS. THIS IS NOT YOUR FAULT."**



## **SPEAK THE TRUTH. TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS.**

If children ask questions, "why is this happening,"  
or make statements, "I hate the enemy," talk about  
what they are feeling. Do not lie or make up stories  
about what is happening.

Crying is therapeutic. Allow yourself and the child  
to cry openly.



## **DO NOT BE AFRAID OF YOUR EMOTIONS.**

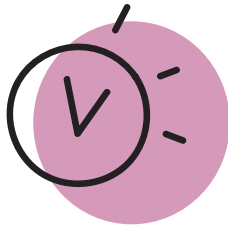
Do not be afraid of feelings you or the child  
may be experiencing. It is important to experience  
the emotions fully. Experience and express your  
feelings together with the child.

# HOW TO HELP CHILDREN OUTSIDE A WAR ZONE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS



## MAINTAIN PHYSICAL TOUCH WITH THE CHILD.

- As much as possible, hold hands, give each other back rubs, hugs, and high fives.
- Sit together with the child and wrap yourselves in a blanket.



## RESUME YOUR NORMAL ROUTINES.

As much as possible, resume your normal routines with the child. For example: reading a book at bedtime, playing board games, brushing your teeth, etc.



## EAT AND DRINK WITH THE CHILD.

For example: cook together, eat together, have a cup of tea together.



## INITIATE CONTACT.

Pay attention to the child. Smile, make eye contact, use kind words and affirmations.



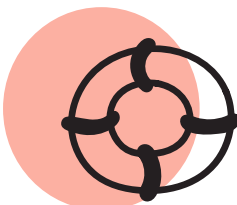
## SLEEP AND REST.

- Give the child more time to sleep and rest. Do not worry about their education.
- Children cannot learn under stress.
- Lower all expectations.



## TAKE TIME TO PLAY AND BE CREATIVE.

- Play hide and seek, tag, imaginary games, storytelling, etc.
- Draw with pencils, crayons, or your hands.
- Use play dough, homemade modeling clay, or anything tactile.
- Play breathing games. For example: blowing a balloon, blowing out candles, or pretending to be wind.
- Plant seeds and take care of plants.



## PRACTICE SELF-CARE. ASK FOR HELP.

- Make sure you are taking care of your needs as well. Ask for help from people. Give yourself breaks when possible. Remember it is important to take time to relax.
- If you lose your temper, stop, take a break, and breathe. When you feel better, apologize to the child, tell the child this is not their fault, and continue.

# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD DURING BOMBING?

## 1. 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.



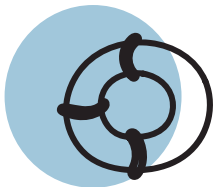
- Hug your children if they want and allow children to 'nestle in' on your lap.



- Sing together childhood songs. It gives a sense of security.

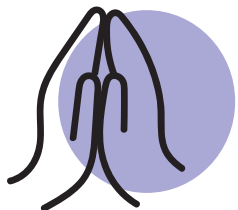
- Avoid open conflict and confrontation among friends and family.

- 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 a balance between treating them as adults (telling the truth, sharing your thoughts with them, giving responsibility) but also allowing them to ask for support.

# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD DURING BOMBING?

## 2. 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.



## 3. 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.



# HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD DURING BOMBING?

## 4. 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.

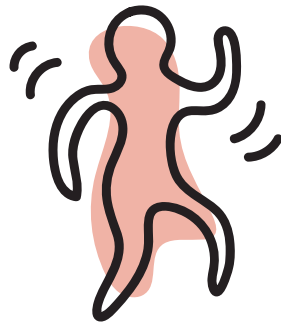
Making a routine out of the bombing can significantly reduce stress and provide your child with some sense of control.



- 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.

# IDEAS FOR INDOOR ACTIVITIES TO DO WITH CHILDREN

MAKE PAPER  
AIRPLANES



HAVE A DANCE PARTY  
AND TAKE TURNS SINGING  
YOUR FAVORITE SONGS

READ A STORY OR MAKE UP  
YOUR OWN STORIES WITH  
FAVORITE CHARACTERS



INVENT YOUR  
OWN IMAGINARY  
GAMES