

Supporting Students Struggling with Concerns about Threats of Violence

Suggested Points to Emphasize When Talking to Children

- Schools are safe places. School staff works with parents and public safety providers (local police and fire departments, emergency responders, hospitals, etc.) to keep you safe.

- The school has procedures for safety in place and works closely with the local police department to ensure safety.

- We all play a role in school safety. Be observant and let an adult know if you see or hear something that makes you feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened.

- There is a difference between reporting, tattling or gossiping. You can provide important information that may prevent harm either directly or anonymously by telling a trusted adult what you know or hear.

- Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to understand the difference between the possibility of something happening and probability that it will affect you (our school community).

- Senseless violence or threats of violence is hard for everyone to understand. Doing things that you enjoy, sticking to your normal routine, and being with friends and family help make us feel better and keep us from worrying about the event.

- Sometimes people do bad things that hurt others. They may be unable to handle their anger, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or suffering from mental illness. Adults (parents, teachers, police officers, doctors, faith leaders)

work very hard to get those people help and keep them from hurting others. It is important for all of us to know how to get help if we feel really upset or angry and to stay away from drugs and alcohol.

- Stay away from guns and other weapons. Tell an adult if you know someone has a gun. Access to guns is one of the leading risk factors for deadly violence.

- Violence is never a solution to personal problems. Students can be part of the positive solution by seeking help from an adult if they or a peer is struggling with anger, depression, or other emotions they cannot control.

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RESOURCES

NASP
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
School Psychologists

Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Educators

Families and school personnel play a critical role in helping to reestablish a sense of normalcy and security for children after an act of violence occurs. Follow these key reminders and visit www.nasponline.org/children-and-violence to learn more.

- Reaffirm Safety**
Emphasize that schools are very safe. Let children speak about their feelings and validate all reactions to the event. Support the appropriate expression of their feelings and help to put them in perspective.
- Make Time to Talk**
Let children's questions guide the information provided. Be patient and look for clues that a child wants to talk. Young children may need concrete activities (e.g., imaginative play) and some older children may prefer writing or playing music.
- Keep Explanations Developmentally Appropriate**

Early Elementary Provide simple information balanced by assurance of safety.	Upper Elementary & Early Middle Answer questions and assist in separating reality from fantasy.	Upper Middle & High Emphasize student role in safety & how to access support.
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- Review Safety Procedures**
Help children identify one adult at school and in the community that they can go to if they feel threatened or at risk. Review procedures and safeguards in school and home settings.
- Observe Children's Emotional State**
Some will not express themselves verbally but changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns can indicate anxiety or stress. Seek help from a mental health professional for those with more intense reactions.
- Maintain a Normal Routine**
Keep a regular schedule to assure and promote physical and mental health. Encourage maintenance of school work and extracurricular activities but do not push children if they seem overwhelmed. Limit TV exposure.

For additional guidance, visit www.nasponline.org/safety-and-crisis.
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If you have concerns related to your child’s emotional health, it is advisable to consult with your child’s school counselor or physician.

Middle School Guidance (508) 541-7324 High School Guidance (508)384-1000

If there is an immediate mental health emergency, families should call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

Riverside Emergency Services

781-769-8674 or 800-529-5077

24 hour/7 day crisis intervention

Riverside is the state Emergency Service Provider for this area. Youth Emergency Services team provides services to children (under 21) who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis with a mobile, or virtual face-to-face response.

[Riverside Emergency Services Information](#) [Fact Sheet](#)

Other resources for those in distress or needing support:

National Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 for emotional support services.

Samaritans Helpline

24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call or text us anytime. Services are free, confidential, and anonymous. **(877) 870-4673**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or text the **Crisis Text Line** at **741741**. Both contact resources offer emotional support services.

Trevor Project

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25.

Trevor Lifeline, available 24/7/365 1-866-488-7386

TrevorText for confidential messaging with Trevor counselor, Text START to 678678.

Jed Foundation

Provides free, confidential support 24/7.

Text START to 741-741 or call 1-800-273 TALK (8255) for 24/7, free, confidential support for teens and young adults.

Other Massachusetts Based Supports:

King Philip, Norfolk, Plainville, & Wrentham Schools Family Wellness Resources Website

Riverside's Behavioral Health Access Line (8am-8pm seven days a week)

Anyone in the state can access the BHAL team by calling 211 (the State's information and referral line) or by calling [888-502-BHAL](tel:888-502-BHAL) (888-502-2425).

Callers are connected to Riverside staff who listen to their needs, help them assess what supports are appropriate, and then staff connect the caller to that service - often while the caller is still on the line. Unlike most referral services, the BHAL team provides a "warm hand-off" to outpatient services, substance use treatment programs, Day Treatment, in-home therapy, and more.

Compass Helpline-NAMI MASS, National Alliance for Mental Health-

Mass Navigators with experience navigating the mental health system answer questions and refer to community resources

Monday through Friday, 9 am-5 pm 617-704-6264

If concerns about your child's emotional health continue for an extended period of time, or you feel they would benefit from a provider in the community:



**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

INTERFACE Referral Service

Interface Helpline is available for the students of the King Philip, Norfolk, Plainville and Wrentham districts to consult with a mental health professional about resources and/or receive personalized matched referrals to support access to outside providers. Monday-Friday, 9:00 am -5:00 pm,
1-888-244-6843

Note this is not a hotline for crisis response.
