

Supporting your child around worrying world events

The current situation in the Ukraine is worrying for all of us and our children are likely to be hearing about it. This is a short guide for parents around how to support your children when there are such uncertain situations in the world. You can also look at the BBC website for advice: [Advice if you're upset by the news - CBBC Newsround](#)

How much news is it good for them to see?

As little as possible.

As much as you can and is realistic for their age and situation you should try and protect your children from the news. Also, particularly with younger children, be careful about the conversations they might overhear at home and words that might be worrying, confusing or upsetting for them.

What should I do if they hear something or ask a question?

It is likely your children will hear something about the current situation, either on the news or from others talking about it.

The main thing that you need to do in this situation, as with all big difficult topics is:

Make a safe space and open up the conversation

You **don't** need all the answers, but you **do** need to be interested willing to listen:

What have they have heard?

What do they understand?

How they feel?

What are their fears or worries?

Be aware that your child has probably been thinking about this before asking you and they may already have some ideas of their own.

Top tips for talking about a difficult topic

Stay honest (ALWAYS!)

Keep it simple (age appropriate)

Accept ALL feelings as ok and normal (your child's and your own)

Be led by their questions

Give them opportunities to ask more questions

Reassure your child of their current safety

Remember!

You don't need to have all the answers!

Listening and offering a safe space for your child to make sense of their experience is the most important thing to do.

How to respond if you are asked questions you do not know the answer to e.g. 'Will there be a world war?' :

- *Do we know the answer? No.*
- *Can we respond in a way that feels safe to our children? YES!*
- *'This is a big question. I wonder if you're feeling worried or quite scared? If you are that's ok, it's normal to feel that, I'm feeling worried too. I don't know the answer, but I know we are safe right now.'*

Once you have had a difficult conversation it's important to think about what your children can do to help themselves feel better – something fun, interesting and not related to the big worries in the world.

Look after yourself!

What is happening in the world is affecting all of us.

Make sure you do whatever you and your body needs to feel safe and contained:

- Talk to people you trust, move, rest, or do something that you enjoy and try to limit how much news and information you are consuming.

Not only does this help you feel better able to cope but your children see how you care for yourself when you are stressed or worried and learn from you.

Taking action

Taking positive steps can bring hope to children and offers them a good model of how to problem-solve in difficult situations and gain a sense of agency.

Raise money to help related charities e.g. United Help Ukraine www.unitedhelpukraine.org, the British Redcross Emergency Appeal www.redcross.org.uk

Write to you MP; www.parliament.uk for info