

School Counsellor Newsletter



Making time to talk

Edition Seventeen

You may feel, and your son may feel, like there is a lot going on at the moment. New Zealand, but in particular Christchurch, is preparing to commemorate the March 15 attacks one year on. At the same time COVID-19 is everywhere in the media and anxiety levels at home, in relation to this, may be rising as New Zealand has its first cases. Both of these events are in addition to the busyness and challenges of everyday life. So it is okay if you are feeling a bit worried or a little unsettled. It is okay if your son is feeling a bit worried or a little unsettled. It is completely normal, especially as this is how our brains react when facing, or remembering, a fear or potential threat.

Take the time to notice if your son's behaviour has changed in anyway. Check in with him and let him know that whatever they are feeling it is okay, even if it is different to how others are feeling and responding, and that you are there to support them.

Make the time to talk with your son, whether it be about any thoughts or feelings that have been triggered by the March 15 attacks, worries he has about the Coronavirus, or anything else he has going on at the moment. Answer any questions that they have as honestly as you can, whilst also being age appropriate. For example, for younger children use brief and simple answers such as "you are safe and adults are

working hard to keep you safe." It is fine to say that you do not know the answer to some questions and try and find them out, or acknowledge that sometimes we cannot always explain the actions of others but we can try to understand them from their point of view. If they choose not to talk about things that is fine, yet it would be important for them to know that it is best to talk about any concerns or fears they are having, as this is normal and having correct information is important.

Depending on your son's access to media, it is important that there is parental supervision of what they are reading and seeing about these events so they do not feel overwhelmed by the information.

There are small things we can do to look after ourselves and others, even when times are challenging. For example, being kind, taking a break from the news and social media, and spending time doing the things that make you feel good, such as sport, music, reading with your son, or playing games and practising mindfulness. Maintaining your usual routines will also be helpful at this time.

Always remember that it's normal to feel worried sometimes - you're not alone and by being there for your son he will not be alone either.

If you, or your son, feels they need further support you could access

the following resources:

- [All Right COVID-19 Poster](#)
- [Talking to kids about the Coronavirus: kids worry more when they are kept in the dark](#) (an American based article yet with relevant advice for New Zealand parents also)
- [Talking to Children about COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#) (an American based article yet with relevant advice for New Zealand parents also)
- [Supporting each other after the Christchurch Terrorist attack](#) (released in 2019 soon after the event but its advice is still useful a year later)



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Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).

If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim
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