Helping Children Cope With Uncertainty

INITIATE THE CONVERSATION
- Just because children are not talking about a tragedy, doesn’t mean they’re not thinking about it.

REASSURE THEM
- Tragedy can rattle our sense of safety and our children’s.

LISTEN
- This means giving them your full attention and not jumping to judge or minimize what they are saying.

FIND OUT WHAT THEY KNOW
- The key purpose of this conversation is to correct any misconceptions and offer concrete information.

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO SHARE THEIR FEELINGS
- Sadness, anxiety, fear, stress, even excitement – show understanding and acceptance.

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS
- Honestly express emotions, such as: “you seem sad when we talk about this; I feel sad too.”

FOCUS ON THE GOOD
- Where there is tragedy, there is also heroism – acts by police officers, doctors or ordinary citizens that restore our faith in humanity when it is shaken.

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO ACT
- Encouraging children to do something about what they’re feeling can give them an outlet and restore some control.