

Supporting your grandchildren and their parents

FOR GRANDPARENTS



Grandparents can be a steady, loving presence for grandchildren and their parents after a tragedy, even while carrying worry and grief of their own.

Follow the parents' lead.

Ask the parents what your grandchild already knows, and how they would like you to limit their access to information or conversations about the event. Using the same words and approach helps children feel safe.

Give parents a break.

Parents are carrying a lot right now. Offer time off: come spend time at the house, care for the children for a few hours, or video call with them so parents can rest.

Be a familiar, calming presence.

Many children are having a hard time being apart from their parents right now. Time with a trusted grandparent, in person or by video, can help them feel safe when parents need to step away.

It's okay not to have every answer.

You may be used to being the family's problem-solver. After something like this, no one has all the answers, and it's okay to say so: "I don't know, but we can talk about it together."

Limit media exposure.

Repeatedly watching coverage or reading updates can increase anxiety and distress, for you and for grandchildren nearby. It's okay to step back.

Be mindful of what grandchildren see and hear.

It's okay for children to see you have emotions. Show them how you cope with those feelings in a healthy way.

Take care of yourself, too.

- Notice your own fear, grief, or worry
- Keep up sleep, meals, and movement
- Rest when caring for grandchildren tires you
- Make time for what helps you cope

Lean on your own supports.

Talk with other grandparents, friends, or community members you know and trust. Reach out to a mental health professional or your healthcare provider if you need more help. Needing support is a sign of strength.

A reminder:

- ✓ You don't have to fix everything.
- ✓ Your presence matters.
- ✓ Small moments of connection help.
- ✓ It's okay to take care of yourself.
- ✓ You are not alone.

Grandchildren don't need you to have all the answers.

They need you to be calm, consistent, and close, and to show them it's okay to ask for support.

Caring for yourself helps you be the steady presence your family needs.