



Middle Gate School
7 Cold Spring Road
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Christopher J. Geissler
Principal

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November 19, 2013

Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s):

The following information is intended to help you with planning and providing support to you and your family. With the December 14th anniversary approaching, we are likely to observe mixed emotions from our children and families. It is imperative that we attend to our own needs and difficulties and it is also important for us to be aware that our children may continue to require support. Below is some information regarding what you may or may not see with your children and how to best support them.

There is no standard pattern of reaction to the extreme stress of traumatic experiences. Some individuals respond immediately and others react months or even years later. Some have adverse effects for a long period of time; others recover quickly. The days and months leading up to an anniversary may cause some individuals to feel extremely anxious and sad, while others may appear to be relatively unaffected. We all cope differently and on different timelines.

Reactions can change over time. Some individuals may initially appear to be coping well with the event, but later become discouraged or depressed. You may also find that individuals who have experienced multiple traumas may be struggling more seriously.

Children may feel confused about their emotional reactions to trauma and may try to subdue their feelings to avoid attention from adults or to blend in with their peers. It is our responsibility as adults to help them understand that it is acceptable for them to continue in their personal recovery process and that help is always available.

Some thoughts to consider when planning for the anniversary:

- Plan for how your family would like to spend the anniversary and days leading up to the anniversary. For some, it may be spending a quiet moment alone; others may wish to join with community members. It is important to recognize and respect what is best for you and your family.
- Prepare yourself for increased media coverage and discussion about 12/14. Consider limiting media exposure by monitoring and limiting computer and television use.
- Create a family/social connection plan. Identify close support group members to reach out to or check in with periodically.

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(continued from front)

Things that may be helpful to continue to do:

- Reassure children that they are safe
- Make explanations simple and developmentally appropriate
- Make time to talk
- Maintain routines and consistent expectations
- Promote self-care by making healthy eating and sleeping habits a priority

Some children will need extra help. If you notice changes in your child and are concerned, please do not hesitate to contact the Middle Gate support team.

Sincerely,

The Middle Gate Staff Support Team
Ann Branca, School Counselor
Taylor Carroll-Marino, School Psychologist
Eileen Donnelly-Phillips, LCSW
Heather Lucian, School Psychologist

Resources: www.nctsn.org