

# Florence Crittenton High School

*Educating, Preparing, and Empowering Teen Mothers*

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Dear Florence Crittenton Community:

Our hearts are filled with grief today, and our thoughts and deepest sympathy go out to the entire Uvalde, Texas community as we learn about the unimaginable horror of what happened at Robb Elementary School Tuesday afternoon.

This is a time of intense sorrow and anxiety for all school communities, and we felt it was important to share with you some information about safety procedures in our schools and some general guidance on how to care for our children in coping with the grief and shock that come with learning about tragic events like the shootings today in Texas.

Our DPS Department of Safety and Security works closely with the Denver Police Department and many metro-area safety agencies to help ensure that our schools are safe havens for our kids, our staff, and our community. The Department of Safety and Security also works with the leadership at each of our schools on plans and procedures to keep our campuses secure. Schools restrict building access to one door, which must be monitored at all times during the school day. We will be working with all schools in the coming days to emphasize the importance of vigilance on all safety issues and doing regular reviews with staff of all safety plans.

We also wanted to provide parents with information that will help them talk with their children about what happened today. The most important thing that any parent can do is to remind the child that they're safe, that they're loved, and that they are supported. Children, like many of us, will instinctively ask "Why?" It is very important not to focus on trying to answer the why, but to listen to our children's feelings, to bring them back to how they are feeling and to what we can do to help them feel better.

When talking with children about death, it is very important to be truthful. With younger children, it is important that they understand the concept of death, and parents should use honest and direct language to help explain what death means.

Finally, it is important to allow children to express their feelings openly and honestly while consistently reminding children that they are safe and that the child who died did not DO anything wrong.

Parents also need to acknowledge their own feelings. It is a natural reaction to be extra cautious at this time. However, if as a parent you feel that you are at an extreme level of cautiousness, you might want to seek professional, therapeutic support.

According to the National Association of School Psychologists, parents can use the following tips to talk to children about tragic events:

- Be reassuring.
- Be a good listener and observer.
- Monitor your children's access to news reports.
- Emphasize people's resiliency.
- Highlight people's compassion and humanity.
- Maintain as much continuity and normalcy as possible.
- Spend family time.
- Do something positive with your children to help others in need.
- Ask for help if you or your children need it.

Please contact your school's mental health professional (Nancy Holtgraves and Austyn Grooms) if you feel your child is in need of additional assistance or if you would like a list of additional community mental health resources. The following signs may indicate that your child is having difficulty, but with time the signs of stress should decrease. You may want to watch for some signs of stress in your child, such as:

- Changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Marked changes in usual ways of behavior, including decline in school productivity and mood changes
- Disorganization
- Withdrawal
- Physical symptoms
- Tearfulness

For additional guidance on caring for your children through times of grief and anxiety, please see the following article:

[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/deathgrief.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/deathgrief.pdf)

I know we will all keep the families of Uvalde, Texas in our thoughts and prayers in the coming days and weeks.

Sincerely,

Mr. Howard

Principal - Florence Crittenton High School

