

## News you can use...from your EAP

### Talking to kids about fear and violence

With the continuing widespread media coverage regarding the threat of a terrorist attack in our country, regular news coverage of terrorist attacks committed throughout the world and daily coverage of the war in Iraq, many children may be experiencing increased anxiety, fear and a sense of personal risk. Mental health experts say that children are especially vulnerable to the graphic images and intense media coverage of terrorism and violence.

To help ease any fear or anxiety your child may have about their personal safety, the National Mental Health Association offers the following suggestions to help parents talk to their children:

### Follow these suggestions

-- **Encourage children to talk** about their concerns and to express feelings. Some children may be hesitant to initiate such conversation, so you may need to prompt them by asking if they feel safe at school, in their neighborhood, or in public places. Encourage them to express their feelings through talking, drawing or playing.

-- **Validate the child's feelings.** Do not minimize a child's concerns. However, let him/her know that serious acts of violence are not common in our country and this is why incidents such as the September 11th terrorist attack attract so much media attention. Reassure children that they are safe and that they are loved.

-- **Talk honestly about your own feelings regarding violence.** It is important for children to recognize they are not dealing with their feelings alone. Part of keeping discussion open is not being afraid to say you don't know how to answer a child's question. When such an occasion arises, explain to your child that these acts of violence are rare, and they cause feelings that even adults have trouble dealing with. Temper this by explaining that, even so, adults will always work very hard to keep children safe and secure.

-- **Create safety plans with your child.** Make sure your child knows how to reach you (or another family member or friend) in case of crisis. Remind your child that they can call you anytime they feel threatened.

-- **Recognize behavior that may indicate your child is concerned about their safety.** Younger children may react to violence by not wanting to attend school, go out in public or sleep alone. Teens may minimize their concerns outwardly, but may become argumentative, withdrawn, or allow their school performance to decline.

### Your EAP is here to help

If you want to obtain no cost counseling or other EAP services, please call **800-869-0276** or securely request services from the Member Access section of the EAP website:

[www.eapconsultants.com](http://www.eapconsultants.com)