

## **How to talk to your children about the Manchester Arena attack.**

As we all try to make sense of the attack on Manchester a lot of parents around Manchester and the UK are asking how and if we should be talking to our children about this.

Winston's Wish, a charity for bereaved children released tips at the time of the Westminster Attack and such attacks as this . They provided the following advice .

### **Should we try to shelter our children from information about the Manchester Attack?**

Winston's Wish's main advice is do not try to shelter and try to prevent your children from hearing about it. Other children will have seen the news and it is likely that they will talking about it in school . It is better that this information therefore comes from you so that they can ask questions and that you can reassure them .

### **How should we talk to our children about the Manchester Attack ?**

When talking to your children Winston's Wish recommend that you

"Talk to children using words they understand; give information to younger children a bit at a time

Try and encourage children to ask questions

Answer questions honestly and simply; talking about it won't make it worse

Accept that some things can't be 'made better'

Show willingness to talk about difficult things and use this as an opportunity to reassure them

If children are asking questions, it is a good thing – it shows they trust you and it is better than keeping questions and worries to themselves

Remember that 'super parents' or 'super teachers' don't exist. Just do and say what you can

Don't be afraid to show children how you are feeling "

They also say that "older children will want and be able to handle more"

What should we say about the people who did this or why it happened?

As the news has started to indicate that this was a terror attack the question may arise about the person or people who did this.

Winston's Wish recommend that if you can "try and distinguish between bad acts and bad people. Children find the idea of bad people particularly frightening. Children are also very fair-minded and will want reassurance that the person who did this has been caught by the police and will be punished.

Older children will appreciate more details and the opportunity to explore why people do such desperately terrible things and the way the family are feeling. This can be an opportunity to help young people develop their empathy and reflect on the value of life and relationships. "

They also say if your children " want to know 'why?' you could say something like:

'No-one can completely know why. We know it wasn't an accident. It's so, so difficult to understand why anyone would be so cruel as to kill other people.'

### **What should we do if our children are now scared?**

It is normal for children to start asking questions such as what if it happens again or to us . Winston's Wish recommend that we answer these sorts of questions as honestly as we can whilst reassuring them such as

'The police will do all they can to make sure this sort of attack does not happen here. It is really, really unlikely that this will happen to anyone we know. We will keep you safe'.

### **More information**

If anyone would like any further information on how to talk to your children about attacks such as this or bereavement generally visit [Winston's Wish](#)

We are already aware that there have been hate crime incidents in the Greater Manchester following last night's attack. Please be aware of potential issues

within schools and be extra vigilant at this time, and follow your usual anti bullying procedures.

Please can staff be aware of sensitive language that needs to be used when answering questions about the incident (eg. explosion instead of bomb, and terrorist incident instead of terrorist attack).

### **Useful websites**

[https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/?utm\\_source=twitter\\_nspcc&utm\\_medium=nspccsocialmedia&utm\\_campaign=owntwitter\\_tweet](https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/?utm_source=twitter_nspcc&utm_medium=nspccsocialmedia&utm_campaign=owntwitter_tweet)

<https://socialworktutor.com/talking-to-children-about-terrorism/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002> - this is an article from CBBC's Newsround specifically aimed at children

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/children-calling-childLine-fearing-terrorist-attacks/>