



## How you can support your child during bombing?

### Tips:

- Try to remain as positive as possible. Children read in your behavior what is going on. You do not always have to remain 'strong'; you are already doing the best you can. Engage in self-care, self-compassion, and express positive emotions.
- Hug your children if they want and allow children to 'nestle in' on your lap.
- Sing together childhood songs. It gives a sense of security.
- Avoid open conflict and confrontation among friends and family.
- Accept the way your child feels whatever emotions they show.
- The more you obtain support from others, the better you will be able to help your kids.
- Pray together with your child if you believe in a god or spirituality.
- Do not encourage feelings of anger or revenge in your children. This would only increase anxiety in your child(ren).
- For adolescents, ensure to balance between treating them as adults (telling the truth, sharing your thoughts with them, giving responsibility) but also allowing them to ask for support.

### Ways to reduce stress:

- Breathing exercises:
  - Smelling flowers: Tell your child to imagine they are smelling a flower, breathing in deeply through the nose and out through the mouth. They can also imagine the flowers in their head.
  - The little bunny: Just like a bunny in the garden, encourage your child to take three quick sniffs in through the nose, and one long exhale out through the mouth.
  - Stress ball: Make your own stress ball by filling cloth, plastic bags or balloons with dry lentils or rice. Squeeze the ball when feeling stressed to release muscle tension.
- Positive imagination exercises:
  - Imagine a safe space together, wherever this may be. Let your child express what they see and feel in this place.

- Remind your child about positive past experiences, family and friends.

#### As much as possible:

- Try to ensure that basic needs are met (food, drink, clothes, nappies, toileting)
- Try to build up a daily routine. Daily routines provide stability and reassurance that at least something is constant and under control
- Avoid exposing children to graphic or audio details: in real life, on TV, on radio or on your phone.
- Try to avoid directing your child to feel a certain feeling. Some might be very reserved and quiet during attacks while some may be angry. Validate and accept their feelings

#### Physical safety guidelines:

- Show your child how to cover themselves when there is a bombing nearby: lay down on the stomach, cover ears and slightly open the mouth.
- If there is no shelter available, it is better to stand in the staircase of a building and stay away from windows
- Remind your child to avoid touching unknown items or ruins after the bombing to avoid interaction with explosives.
- Practice with your child: What do we do when there is active bombing? What do we do after? If there is a shelter available, practice running to the shelter. Making a routine out of the bombing can significantly reduce stress and provide your child with some sense of control.
- Have an 'emergency run-bag' of basic supplies that you can take with you when you move to a shelter or cellar. Include a few small toys in the bag, along with food, drink, nappies, spare clothes, phone, documents etc.

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