

Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth

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Helping children when frightening things happen

Many of you may be wondering how to support your children to deal with the recent events in Ottawa. Below you will find some ideas that you might find helpful in the days and weeks to come:

- 1) It is important to remind children that this was a very rare event and that they are safe. Children may be worried because the events were “close to home” and they may need to be reassured by reminding them that this was a very rare event and that is why there is so much coverage about it in the media.
- 2) It is important to answer the questions that children have but not to provide too much detail. If the child wants more information, they will ask and then you can decide whether it is information you want them to have. This will depend on the question they are asking, their age and if you think the answer will be useful to them in their understanding of the situation.
- 3) Children need to be protected from too much information about the situation. We may not realize just how many places kids get exposed to information that they may not need to know or have the ability to understand. Examples can be the news playing in the car, news channels sending out “live” or updated information on a regular basis, overhearing adults talking.
- 4) Children need to be reassured that they are safe to continue with their usual activities (school, after school activities, etc.). Maintaining a regular routine is a strong message to children that things are ok.
- 5) Set an example for your children. Parental attitude and reaction can have a very strong influence on children and they will look to you to see if they can feel safe and secure.
- 6) There are places to contact if you are concerned about how your child is reacting or if you feel that you need support. One of those places is Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth, your local children’s mental health centre.