

Talking to your child about War and Conflict



BE HONEST

Answer questions factually and consider how much information is appropriate to your child's age and development. Children can feel and sense emotions the same way we do and if you're not honest with your child it can make them even more frightened. If you don't know the answer to their questions tell them so and acknowledge how hard it is to not feel certain or in control of what happens.



BE CALM

Your child will take their lead from you and be reassured if you are steady and matter of fact. Try not to dismiss or talk children out of their feelings or anxieties – accept and acknowledge them and empathise with how hard it must be to feel those things.



BE BRAVE

Start a conversation with them. Some children may not ask questions or appear upset, but this doesn't necessarily mean they don't have fears or anxieties. Choose a time when you are together and busy with something to ask what they have heard about the war and if they have any questions or worries.



BE BALANCED

Use familiar language and be careful not to overload children with too much information. Use child friendly sources such as Newsround. Try and limit how much they see on TV or social media. If it is appropriate for their age, empower them with the things they can do e.g., filling a shoe box with essential toiletries or toys for those who are displaced. Look for the helpers, keep them hopeful by balancing some of the news statistics with stories of compassion, kindness, and courage.

