

Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with the Impact of Terrorism

Robert Brooks, Ph.D.

The horror of September 11, 2001 will be forever etched in our minds and hearts. Many people have written to me and I have also been interviewed by the media about how best to help children cope with the events of that day. I gave a couple of workshops at the end of last week, workshops that people did not want to cancel believing it was important for parents and professionals to get together to discuss such topics as hope and resilience. I found it comforting to have an opportunity to share my thoughts about these important themes at such a troublesome time. Several parents, educators, and mental health professionals spoke with me not only about helping youngsters deal with the terrorist attacks but also how they could deal with their own sadness and distress. I plan to share thoughts about this in my next newsletter.

Until then, I want to recommend a website that I just reviewed and found to contain excellent articles for helping children deal with stress and trauma. It is www.connectforkids.org. A couple of the articles offer specific suggestions for parents and teachers on how they might assist children and adolescents deal with the attack that took place last week on the United States. I hope you find the articles as beneficial as I did. In addition, I hope that we can all find the strength within ourselves, and within our families and communities, to cope with the many intense feelings—especially sadness and anger—that were elicited last week.

I wish to convey my prayers and wishes to all of those who lost loved ones in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Many years ago I lost a brother to terrorism; he was an officer in the Air Force. I know on a very personal level the impact of such a loss.

And finally, I want to acknowledge the countless heroes of this tragedy, the women and men who have tirelessly attempted to find and rescue victims, many losing their own lives in the process.

<http://www.drrobertbrooks.com>