



The shooting incident which took place on Sunday, 25 February at a football game in West Bay is devastating and frightening in our small community. Our young people may be affected directly or by proxy because of how quickly news travels around the island.

Here are some helpful tips to support our young people during this difficult time:

- **First take care of yourself.** Ensure the information you have is factual, and that you are feeling safe and grounded yourself before approaching a young person.
- **Manage media input.** It's normal to want to know what is going on and you may find yourself checking the news several times a day. However, this may increase your anxiety and ability to function. Therefore, manage your exposure to media and allow time to digest the information.
- **Talk about the event** using accurate and age-appropriate language, explaining to the young person what happened, asking them if anyone they know may be hurt and reassuring them that they are cared for.
- **Help the young person feel safe:**
 - Talk with young people about their concerns over safety and discuss changes that are occurring in the community to increase safety. Encourage your young person to voice their concerns to you, other adults or teachers at school.
- **Be aware of and prepare for a variety of reactions** that are normal under these circumstances:
 - Feelings of fear, anxiety and worry about their own safety and that of others.
 - Fears that another shooting may occur.
 - Withdrawal and avoidance of going out or even going to school.
 - Complaints of physical symptoms (stomachs, headaches, aches and pains).
- **Offer reassurance and a safe place** for young people to talk about how they feel and have their questions answered.
- **Promote your young person's self-care** and keep up with the daily routine.
- **Limit the young person's media exposure.** Protect your child from too much media coverage or talks about the event. Too much exposure can be triggering.

When to seek professional help:

- If your child is in extreme distress and cannot be soothed for a long period of time
- Prolonged mood and behavioural changes following the event with no signs of improvement
- Complaints of flashbacks, nightmare, and anxiety

List of local resources: <https://alexpantonfoundation.ky/resources/>

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www.alexpantonfoundation.ky