



# Care, Cope, Connect

Comforting and Supporting Kids  
During Community Stress

## INSIDE

- More than 20 ways to help kids feel safe and secure
- Self-care tips for parents and caregivers
- 4 activity pages just for kids



**As a parent or caregiver,** your love is powerful. Even during difficult times, you will always protect your child. She will remember how you kept her safe, no matter what. When scary events happen, everyone sees the images in the media. This affects people’s views of others. In these situations, it’s important to support each other and protect the children.

Always have hope for your child’s happy, safe, and peaceful future. In these pages, you’ll find information on giving kids a chance to keep growing smarter, stronger, and kinder, even during difficult times.

**You can let kids know you care.**  
**Your family can learn ways to cope.**  
**And talking and listening will help you and your child connect.**

**You shouldn’t expect to do this by yourself.**  
**No one can. And no one is ever alone.**



Available in other languages at



[sesamestreetincommunities.org](http://sesamestreetincommunities.org)

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### sesameworkshop®

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit organization behind *Sesame Street*, the television show that has been reaching and teaching children since 1969. Sesame Workshop has a mission to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We’re active in over 150 countries, serving vulnerable children through media, formal education, and philanthropically-funded programs, each grounded in research and tailored to local needs and cultures. For more information, please visit [sesameworkshop.org](http://sesameworkshop.org).

# Calming Yourself

Uncertainty makes everyone very anxious. Here are some ways to help calm down.

## For You

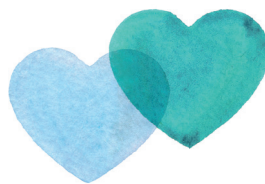
- » Anxiety makes you tired. You need energy, so take care of yourself. Simple, healthy habits like eating well and moving around can help you manage your feelings. Add one fruit or vegetable to your diet every day, or dance around and sing with your kids.
- » We can lose sleep when we're stressed. If possible, lie down and relax with your child when she naps or sleeps. You might sing her a song you loved when you were a child—one that comforts you, too. Later, take a walk together.
- » It's important to know what's going on but limit what your children see in the news. Choose what information to share and how you'll explain it to them.
- » Reach out within your community for help.

## For the Whole Family

- » “Belly breathe”: Put your hands on your bellies. Take three deep breaths in and out. Feel your bellies rise and fall. Put a stuffed animal on your child's belly. Have him “rock it to sleep” as he breathes.
- » Take a break together and relax. Focus on something else for a while. Try the “Hearts & Hope” and “Our Favorite Things” activities on pages 4 and 5.

On the next page:

## *Hearts & Hope*



Sometimes just sitting quietly together is relaxing and comforting for both kids and grown-ups. Color this page together with your child (maybe while listening to music she enjoys). You can color the small hearts while your child colors the large picture.



# Hearts & Hope



# Our Favorite Things



## Memory Game

The Sesame Street friends love to hold their favorite dolls or animal friends. Play this memory game with your child when he needs a little comfort.

1. Cut apart the cards and put them facedown.
2. Take turns turning over two cards at a time.
3. If the cards match, the player keeps them. If they don't, the player turns them back over and the other player takes a turn.

The person with the most cards in the end gets a big hug, a high-five, or a pat on the back! Later, if your child wants some company, he can choose a card and keep it in his pocket.



# Some Things Never Change

When you feel out of control, it helps to have a routine, even one small thing every day. Create rituals that comfort you and your child:

- » Sing a favorite song together at bedtime every night.
- » Look out the window at the moon and stars before bed. You can say: “What does the sky look like?” “What shape is the moon?” “Let’s count the stars.”
- » Sit down to eat together. Talk about the best part of your day. Share what you are looking forward to. You can also use this time to share important information.
- » Start a new tradition with the “Good Morning, Superhero!” activity on page 7.

Here are things you can say anytime, again and again:

- » “People are working hard to make things better.”
- » “My love for you is one thing that will never change.”
- » “I will always do everything I can to keep you safe, no matter what.”
- » “We will get through this, one way or another.”
- » “Home is wherever our family is.”
- » “This is not your fault.”



# Good Morning, Superhero!



Sometimes you have to work to find strength from inside. Stand straight and tall in front of a mirror. Put your hands on your hips. Together with a grown-up, call out any or all of these sentences:

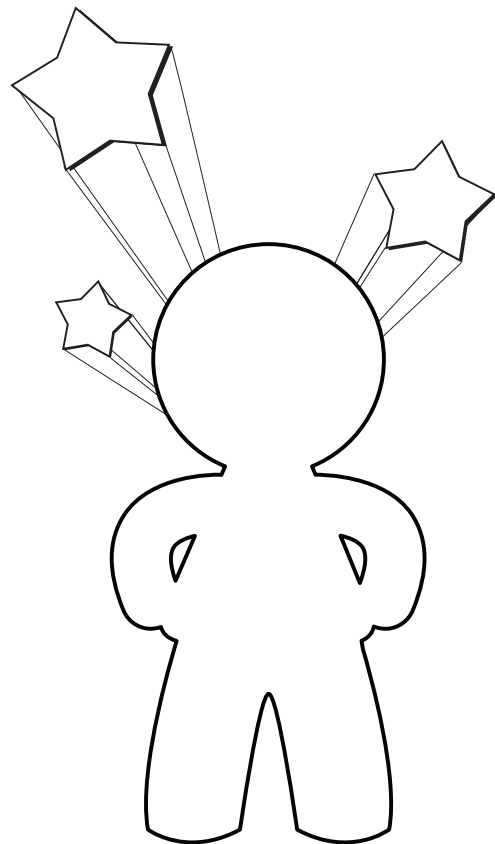
- » “I am strong and brave!”
- » “I have a family who loves me no matter what!”
- » “I know that love wins!”
- » “I respect others!”
- » “I believe in myself!”
- » “I have hope for the future!”
- » “If I fall down, I’ll get back up!”
- » “My family will always help me!”

Now color in the shape next to Grover to look like you. Write down your own superhero sentences.

I \_\_\_\_\_ !

I \_\_\_\_\_ !

Hang this page on your door. Remember every day that you are a superhero!



# Stay with Me

In uncertain times, every moment feels fragile. Children can become more clingy and afraid of being apart from parents and caregivers. You may notice changes in your child's eating, sleeping, or toileting habits. To help, you might:

- » Remind your child that she will always be taken care of, no matter what.
- » Give your child a comfort item, such as a teddy bear or blanket. A towel or soft piece of cloth can do the job, especially if it's a piece of your clothing or that of a loved one!
- » Hug and hold hands—the more often the better!
- » Cut out paper heart shapes. Together, on each one, draw or write things you love about each other. Exchange them to keep in your pockets or bags when you're apart, or display them.
- » Develop an emergency plan (see below). Discuss this with friends and family who help keep your child safe. Explain it to your child and ask her to repeat it back to you.

## Far-Away Hugs

If your child is missing a family member far away, there are ways to feel closer:

- » Wish on the same star as that person wishes on (set a specific time and star!).
- » Wear a piece of that person's clothing.
- » On a windy day, send that person kisses on the breeze.
- » Close your eyes and hug yourself. Imagine you are hugging that person.



## Our Family Emergency Plan

Fill in the blank lines with the following important information for your child to remember:

These are our safe places:

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These are our safe people who can help you anytime I am not there:

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Here's where to go if we get separated:

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Draw these people and places on another piece of paper.



# You Can Count On Me

Kids need to know they'll be loved and taken care of, no matter what. Let your child know in these simple ways:

- » Every day, tell him who will be taking care of him (picking him up at school, making dinner, and so on).
- » Create cozy, magical moments together. Cover yourselves in a blanket and turn on a flashlight. Then read or tell stories!

Help your child complete the “Elmo’s Rainbow Hug” activity on page 10 (once folded, your child can also decorate the “flaps”).

## Talking About It

Encourage your child to ask questions and share feelings. Kids “hear things” from others and misunderstandings can happen. You might say:

- » “You can always ask me questions.”
- » “Have you heard anything in school that worries you?”
- » “You will always be cared for.”
- » “I’m here for you.”
- » “I’m glad you’re telling me how you feel.”
- » “All of your feelings are okay.”

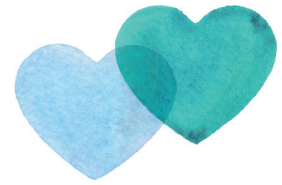
Sometimes you just might not know how to answer. It’s okay to say “I don’t know, but I’m working hard to find out.”

If you’re in a serious situation, you might say:

- » “Lots of people are trying to help, and I’m asking the right people.”
- » “Some problems are only for grown-ups to figure out. We’ll keep trying and working on this problem.”



# You're Not Alone



## Elmo's Rainbow Hug

Here's a big, warm, colorful hug from Elmo! Hugs always make Elmo feel better, and thinking about rainbows makes him feel happy. Think about what makes you feel safe and happy. Color in the card and fold the page along the dotted lines. Then, help Elmo share rainbow hugs with your family, friends, and helpers. Don't forget to give yourself a big hug, too!

