



## Helping Children to Cope with Frightening News

### Jonny Timms

Most of us will have been sleeping when the news of the unfathomable Las Vegas shooting first came out. The news was there waiting for us when we woke up and looked at phones or saw the morning news on TV, or some other screen. It again raises the question of how we handle helping our boys with scary and tragic news?

Harold S. Koplewicz, MD is a psychiatrist and runs the Child Mind Institute. His advice for relating upsetting news stories is that it is better to hear the information from you rather than the feeds on their phones or from other boys whenever possible. Koplewicz writes the following in an article titled "[Helping Children Cope With Frightening News](#)":

*"Take your cues from your child... Give him ample opportunity to ask questions. You want to be prepared to answer (but not prompt) questions about upsetting details. Your goal is to avoid encouraging frightening fantasies."*

I would add that sometimes our boys are not always sure what questions they have or what emotions they are feeling. That is normal and telling them that is essential. It can be helpful to say how you are feeling and the questions that are rumbling around in your head such as: "How is it that people are capable of such extreme goodness, and yet at times such unbelievable cruelty?" These types of questions can be unanswerable, but it is so important to discuss.