

## WORDS, STRATEGIES AND 'WHY' TO TALK TO CHILDREN - Maria Trozzi, M.Ed

The most pressing questions that we, as parents and adults, have as we face yesterday's tragedy are:

- How do we talk to our children?
- How can we reassure our children and ourselves that we are doing everything we can to keep us safe?

The airline instruction to 'put on our OWN oxygen masks before we put on our children's' comes to mind.

- [Limit YOUR EXPOSURE to media coverage](#)
- Be aware of your child's age and developmental stage as you help them to [sort out their thoughts and feelings](#). How to talk to your [3-6 year old](#), [6-10 year old](#) and [10-young adult](#).

What can we do? We can create a conversation in our own community about:

- Early identification of 'troubled' children and adolescents and access to effective psychiatric treatment
- A renewed look at the role of social media
- Better access for ALL children and families to mental health services
- Home, school, community focus on modeling tolerance and mitigating isolation for children who are 'different'
- Making informed decisions about our children's exposure to media violence, both on television and films.
- Rethinking our decisions about our children's exposure to violent video games
- Reconsidering our nation's laws about purchasing and possessing automatic weapons

It is emotionally incongruous for us to move forward into the February vacation week while we as a nation grieve this tragedy. However, renewing and sustaining a conversation within our families, our schools, our houses of worship and our communities about what we CAN do going forward will ultimately protect our children and their future.