

Building Confidence *to Broadcast*:

What are the steps?

What needs to be in place so that when big current events happen, you know how to respond?

How do you build a school culture that normalizes spaces for conversation before events occur?

- Talk with your HoS or division head to share your plans before executing them
- Consult with your school counselor/psychologist
- Consult with advisors or lead teachers and bring them into the fold
- Consider sending a letter home to parents to alert them to the proposed of conversation provide follow-up points of reference for them to continue the dialogue at home
- Explore opportunities to make connections to existing curricula
- Stay attuned to what cohort schools are doing/not doing
- Draw from your school's mission statement – use it for backup!
- Identify “underutilized time” in the schedule to slate for these conversations
- Find allies for the work – ideally those with senior tenure and new faculty/staff
- Find allies on the administrative team to facilitate greater buy in
- Use data and research as to why these conversations are helpful; including students' voice
- Employ your own Self-Care strategies before initiating charged topics for students

Age 2–6 Adapted from: *Common Sense Media*

Reassure with both words and gestures.

Address feelings -- Find out what they know. Your students might not understand the issue very well. Ask them what they think happened before giving them any imagery. **Break down issues to their simplest terms.**

Use basic terms for feelings such as "mad," "sad," "afraid," and "surprised."

Catch your own biases. We all have them. Say, "man," "woman," "girl," and "boy," (or try not to be binary when possible) not "fat guy," "homeless lady," "pretty little girl," or "black boy." Avoid describing a person's ethnicity, sexual identity, weight, financial status, and so on unless it's relevant to the issue.

Age 7–12

Wait for the right moment. At this age, kids are still very likely to come to you if they've heard about something frightening.

Find out what they know. Ask your kids what they've heard, or if their peers or parents are talking about something. Answer questions simply and directly -- but try not to overexplain.

Create a safe space for discussion. Say, "These topics are hard to discuss -- even for adults. Let's just talk. I want you to feel free to ask anything you want."

Provide context and perspective. Kids need to understand the circumstances around an issue to fully make sense of it.

Address their curiosity. If students stumble across grown-up material online, it might be time to find content that will let them learn about more mature subjects age-appropriately. **Be sensitive to students' emotions and temperament.**

Encourage critical thinking. "What did you hear?" "What did it make you think?" and "Why do you think that?" For older kids, you can ask, "Do you think families from other backgrounds would view this the same way as us?"

Look for positives. There may not be a silver lining to every cloud, but try to be optimistic. "Let's find ways that we can help."