

Facing Fear

Helping Young People
Deal With Terrorism and Tragic Events

Expect the Unexpected™ Curriculum Supplement featuring lesson plans
and activities about feelings, facts and the future.

For students aged 8-10.



Canadian
Red Cross

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Version 2

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The Peace Doves



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These doves were selected from a CSQ (Centrale des Syndicats du Québec) campaign that was led after the September 11 events to allow students to express their feelings about the tragedy. These messages were sent to the Prime Minister of Canada, Jean Chrétien. 23,500 elementary and high school students participated in the campaign.

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What We Hope These Materials Will Do

1. Help children feel safe and secure in the aftermath of a terrorist action or tragic event.
2. Help teachers talk to their students about emotionally challenging events.
3. Give students experience in talking about frightening events that they hear or see reported in the media and hear discussed at school and at home.
4. Help teachers and students become critical viewers of the media and use the media to gather facts and distinguish facts from opinion and unsupported observations.
5. Provide a positive outlet for students to express themselves and contribute to the community.
6. Help children and families know what to do and how to prepare for the future.
7. Provide an understanding of the concepts behind the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement—which are based on international laws developed to help and protect people during war or armed conflict—and their application in today's world.

Lesson Plans and Objectives

Lesson Plans and Objectives for Students aged 8-10.

Lesson Plans	Objectives Students will:
Lesson Plan 1 <i>Communicating the Facts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the facts they know based on a news headline and the five W's.
Lesson Plan 2 <i>Be Media Savvy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and compare statements of fact or opinion.
Lesson Plan 3 <i>Impact of the Facts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define "cause and effect".• Identify initial and secondary effects caused by an event; describe a chain of events.• Determine whether effects are local, provincial, national or global.

Background for the Teacher

Facing Fear™ is a flexible curriculum to help young people aged 5-16 be prepared for disasters and deal with the aftermath of terrorism and tragic events.

As much as we would like to protect our children, we cannot shield them from personal or community tragedies. We can, however, help them to be prepared for unforeseen dangerous events and to learn about facing and moving beyond their fears and related concerns.

Young people may be particularly worried about issues of safety, security and trust. There are many reactions that are common after a trauma or disaster. These include re-experiencing the event (for example, flashbacks), avoidance and numbing of feelings, increased arousal and changes in functioning. These reactions may be manifested in clingy behaviours, mood changes, increased anxieties, increased startle responses (for example, more jumpy with noises), somatic complaints and regressive behaviour. Increased aggressive behaviours may also be seen. When the trauma or disaster is man-made, such as a terrorist event, young people may react with hurtful talk, behaviours or play. All of these reactions are normal responses and will, in general, dissipate with time. However, should these persist or increase over time, a referral to a mental health professional should be considered. Similarly, should these reactions result in a danger to self or others, an immediate referral may be warranted.

In the aftermath of terrorism and tragic events, young children can feel overwhelmed with concerns of safety, security and trust. Worries about their own safety as well as the safety of those important in their lives are likely heightened. Although they have developed a sense of empathy and are concerned about others, their immediate needs for personal reassurance will take priority. They will need repeated reassurances about their safety and the safety of those around them. They may have concerns about the event re-occurring; this concern may be exacerbated by repeated exposure to media images. At times children may feel as if they are re-experiencing the event. They may have triggers for memories, such as noises, sights or smells. These “flashbacks” may also occur without an obvious reminder. Re-experiencing can be very frightening for children this age. They may try (without success) to NOT think about the event. Their inability to block the thoughts may produce increased levels of stress. Although children will continue to process recent events, a return to a classroom routine is one of the best ways to reinforce a sense of security and safety.

Children eight to ten years old have the ability to understand the permanence of loss from trauma. They may become preoccupied with details of it and want to talk about it continually. The questions and the details discussed are often disturbing to adults (for example, talk of gore and dismemberment). Such discussions are not meant to be uncaring or insensitive but rather are the way that many children attempt to make sense of a tragedy. Since their thinking is generally more mature than that of children under eight, their understanding of the disaster is more complete. They understand the irreversibility of death but may continue to ask questions about death and dying as they try to understand the repercussions of the event.

Children this age will attempt to create the “story” of the terrorist action and tragic event. Unfortunately, their attempts will contain misinformation as well as misperceptions. Unless addressed directly, the misunderstanding may be perpetuated and lead to increased levels of stress. Young children are trying to make the story “fit” into their concept of the world around them. Questions related to the trauma may be equally repetitive. Teachers may answer a child’s question only to have the same question repeated within a few minutes. Having the same answer will increase the child’s sense of security and help the child process the trauma.

One result of a man-made tragedy may be intense feelings of anger and a sense of revenge. With an inaccurate understanding of events, these feelings may develop into hateful/hurtful talk or play. It may be directed toward classmates or groups of people. This behaviour should be immediately addressed. Open discussions with these young students may improve their understanding of the event as well as reduce inappropriate direction of anger toward others.

Feelings accompanying the event may overwhelm elementary-aged children. In addition to the anger, they may also have feelings of guilt and intense sadness; nervousness is also seen. As they attempt to process these feelings, a change in school performance may be seen. Some children will have a drop in school performance as attention to and concentration on their work diminish. They may not be able to grasp new concepts as easily as before the event and grades may show a decline. Children may become more active in their behaviours as well as more impulsive and reckless. These behaviours often appear similar to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and/or learning disabilities. Although either may be present, the impact of the event as a reason for the behaviour changes should be considered. Children may develop problems in sleep and appetite after a traumatic event or disaster. These changes may contribute to a decrease in school performance.

It is important to note that some children may try to handle feelings of guilt and worry by an intense attention to schoolwork. These children may be worried about disappointing teachers and parents. Through their intense focus on school, they may be attempting to avoid activities and thoughts that are disturbing.

Children's anxiety and fear may be seen in an increased number of physical complaints. These may include headaches, stomach aches, feelings of nausea or vague aches and pains. Expression of these emotions may also be seen in mood changes. Children may become more irritable and quarrelsome. They may become more aggressive at recess. Although some children may act out more, others may become more withdrawn and detached from activities and friends around them. They may be having an equally hard time processing the events, but because of their quietness, they are often overlooked as having any difficulties.

In the face of tragic events, children of this age will be seeking ways to help others. By finding positive avenues for expressing their concerns and need for involvement, initial negative reactions to the event may begin to diminish. Working to guide children in positive directions can be an important aspect of the healing process.

It is important to remember that all of these reactions are normal and, generally, will diminish with time.

Tips for Using the Lesson Plans

The Canadian Red Cross *Facing Fear*[™] curriculum contains lesson plans for teachers and includes hands-on or interactive activities for the classroom that will help students and their families prepare for disastrous situations and equip them with tools to sort out their feelings and fears.

Components of this curriculum supplement the lessons in core classroom subjects that teachers are already teaching. Based on the abilities of your students, their interests and their experiences, you can choose which lesson plans to introduce and how extensively to cover them.

An important goal is to engage families in this curriculum. To this end, “Home Connection” segments of the lesson plans offer you opportunities to enhance parental involvement in the curriculum experiences covered in the classroom.

The lesson plans are presented in a two-column format. The wider, right column contains the lesson descriptions; the estimated time required for setting up, conducting and wrapping up; and activities for students that reinforce the lesson learning objectives. The left column contains the materials needed for activities and symbols that quickly alert you to activities, curriculum links, wrap-ups and home connections.

As you lead the *Facing Fear*[™] activities, it’s important to emphasize that students must listen to and respect each other. Everyone can have the opportunity to share and participate. No inappropriate laughter, teasing or denial of any individual’s ideas should occur. Students may have similar as well as different ideas, and all are valid.

During discussions, many students will want to talk. When young people share feelings and thoughts, they may have difficulty finding the right words. You can help them communicate by locating the emotions behind their statements. For example, you could say something like, “It sounds as if you don’t like to spend all your free time cleaning up. I wonder if that makes you feel angry sometimes.” Or, “Everything is quiet at night. I wonder if that is a time you feel most scared or worried.” Sometimes, students may have difficulty talking about their own thoughts and feelings. In addition to encouragement and support for sharing, you may also phrase discussion questions in the third person. For example, rather than, “How do you feel about...” you may also try, “How do you think children may feel about...”

Young people may also make negative or hateful remarks, particularly when they have been affected by a trauma or disaster that is human-caused. Acknowledge the anger, but help them differentiate between the perpetrator(s) and other people in the community who may share, or appear to share, similar ethnic, religious or cultural characteristics, but who have no connection to the traumatic event. Discussion of how intolerance can lead to violence against everyday people is important.

Younger children need to see the adults as in control and as a strong support during a difficult time. With older (middle and high school) students, it’s okay to acknowledge that you may be experiencing some of the same difficulties they are, but express assurance that healing will occur.

Be sure to use encouragement and praise.

It’s also important that you be aware of your own reactions and feelings. Be conscious of your own opinions, feelings and thoughts as you guide the class. You may want to review the lesson plan and the feelings it evokes in you before presenting it to the class. Share your own feelings with someone in your support system. Young people take cues from the important adults around them. Think about what you wish them to hear from you. Be aware that you will not be effective if you purposely or inadvertently take one side over another in controversies of a political, religious or other nature, including taking the side of one student over another. When you model respect for and tolerance of all the views and feelings that your students share, your students will try to do the same.

Moving Forward in Spite of Life-Affecting Events

Frightening events, such as the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, major floods and tornadoes, earthquakes here and in other countries, massive transportation accidents, war or armed conflict or other military action, impact us all. Events caused by human beings can be particularly frightening and raise unique concerns.

Terrorist actions are designed to instill fear in individuals and communities, if not countries. Because they happen without warning, there is no time to prepare. This unpredictability leaves us with a heightened sense of vulnerability and anxieties that the event could be repeated again, anywhere. With increased media coverage, even those not directly impacted can be significantly affected by the event. Images make us feel closer to the victims and we may perceive ourselves as victims of the actions as well. The questions that arise from disasters of human design are difficult, if not impossible, to answer. We want answers to “why” and “how could they” and are often left frustrated by lack of satisfying responses. This frustration also gives rise to intense feelings of anger. The anger toward the perpetrators may be uncomfortable and difficult to express in productive ways. Generalizing about the terrorists (for example, all Muslims, all Arabs, or all people with strong disagreement with the government) may lead to an increase in hate, prejudice and violence toward innocent people and groups, thus expanding the victims of the initial attack. As adults struggle with reactions and feelings in the aftermath of a terrorist action or tragic event, children are similarly searching for how to best handle their feelings. At all ages, they take cues from adults around them (parents, teachers and community and national leaders).

Young people need to know that their reactions and feelings to such events are normal. They need to recognize that others feel very similar. Most important, young people need to know that they will begin to feel better with time and that it is acceptable to enjoy friends, family and activities. They need to know that there are things they can do to help themselves move forward in a positive way.

The lessons and activities in this curriculum are designed to help you help your students address their fears and move beyond them.

The *Facing Fear*[™] curriculum supplements the Canadian Red Cross *Expect the Unexpected*[™] curriculum, which provides standards-based lesson plans and activities about natural hazards, including hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, tornadoes and lightning, and general family disaster preparedness. For more information, visit www.redcross.ca/facingfear.

With permission, parts of Background for the Teacher above were adapted from *Healing After Trauma Skills*, Robin H. Gurwitch and Anne K. Messenbaugh, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Department of Pediatrics, 2001.



Lesson Plan 1

Communicating the Facts

Purpose

To help students:

- To identify students' perceptions of an act of terrorism or tragic event and correct misconceptions.
- To identify angles taken in news reports about an act of terrorism or tragic event.

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the facts they know based on a news headline and the five W's.

Activities

- "Fact Finding With the Five W's"



Lesson Plan 1

Communicating the Facts

Fact Finding With the Five W's Activity

Set up: 15 minutes

Conduct: 30 minutes

Materials

- Five or six different headlines and news stories based on an act of terrorism or tragic event
- Five large pieces of chart paper with “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” “Why” written down the left-hand side
- Markers

1. Divide the class into five small groups. Distribute a newspaper headline to each group. Have students work together to surmise the five W's that would be included in that news story.
2. Ask groups to select a spokesperson to share their headline and their five-W facts with the class. Invite students to add to and question the facts. What information is missing? What information may not be correct? Are there disagreements among class members? Why?

TEACHING NOTE: Depending on your timeframe and the abilities of your students:

- Select the headlines and news articles yourself or invite students to bring them in.
- Before dividing the class into groups, work through one headline as a whole group.



Lesson Plan 2

Be Media Savvy

Purpose

To identify, compare and evaluate news sources.

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify and compare statements of fact or opinion.

Activity

- Fact Versus Opinion



Lesson Plan 2

Be Media Savvy

Fact Versus Opinion Activity

Set up: 10 minutes

Conduct: 30-40 minutes

Material

- Activity Sheet 1:
Fact Versus Opinion
- Newspapers and magazines

1. Have students complete Activity Sheet 1. As a class, discuss the statements and the student designations. Were some statements more difficult to distinguish? Why?
2. Have student groups go through magazines and newspapers to find statements they would designate as fact or opinion. Determine the appropriateness of the use of opinion within the articles.
3. Have students share their statements with the class and see if the class agrees with their designations. Have students create a list of clues for differentiating between fact and opinion. Examples include:
 - The use of phrases such as “I believe” and “It seems to me”
 - Descriptors such as “unattractive,” “beautiful” and “frightening”
4. Is it ever appropriate to use opinion in a news story? Why or why not? Where are opinions found in newspapers, in magazines or on radio and television broadcasts?





Lesson Plan 3

Impact of the Facts

Purpose

Identify the impact of terrorism and tragic events on our homes, schools and communities.

Objectives

Students will:

- Define “cause and effect.”
- Identify initial and secondary effects caused by an event; describe a chain of events.
- Determine whether effects are local, provincial, national or global.

Activity

- Cause and Effect



Lesson Plan 3

Impact of the Facts

Cause and Effect Activity

Set up: 10 minutes
Conduct: 45 minutes

Materials

- Activity Sheet 2:
Cause and Effect

1. An act of terrorism or other tragic event can have far-reaching effects. Help students apply the concept of cause and effect to understand the chain of events started by an initial event.
2. Write this sentence on the chalkboard: Throughout the week, we have had a great deal of rain. Have students brainstorm a list of “effects” that rain would have. For example: grass grows, streambeds fill, farmers’ seedlings rot.
3. Next, have students consider how one event can trigger a chain of events. Here are some examples:
 - Grass grows, people have to mow the grass, yardwork companies hire more employees.
 - Streambeds fill, some overflow, flash flood warnings are in effect, some people evacuate to higher ground.
 - Farmers’ seedlings rot, crops need to be replanted, farmers are faced with a shorter growing season, farmers cannot pay mortgage on farm.Have students discuss how a single cause can trigger a series of effects.
4. Distribute Activity Sheet 2. Have students consider the event under discussion as they fill in the resulting chain of effects.
5. Have students share their ideas with the rest of the class. How many different initial and secondary effects did students find? Did the effects touch all areas, from personal to global? Explain. Did this very negative event cause any positive effects? Explain.

Activity Sheet 2
Cause and Effect

Name _____

Directions: Consider the far-reaching effects caused by a single event.

Event:

Event	What	What	What	What
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Think About It:
How are effects permanent? Local?
National? Global?
How are effects positive?

Why About It:
How has things changed?
How are things the same?
What are some positive changes at home,
at school or in the community?

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Activity Sheet 1

Fact Versus Opinion

Definitions

Fact: A statement that can be proven either true or false.
Example: Pedro is 12 years old.

Opinion: A statement that describes what a person feels, thinks or believes is true.
Others may agree or disagree, but an opinion cannot be proven true or false.
Example: Pedro is good-looking.

Directions: Identify the statements below as fact or opinion.

1. **I have two brothers and one sister.**
 Fact
 Opinion
2. **That book is by J.K. Rowling.**
 Fact
 Opinion
3. **That's the best book ever written.**
 Fact
 Opinion
4. **The best author in the world writes books about Harry Potter.**
 Fact
 Opinion
5. **Maria is smart.**
 Fact
 Opinion
6. **Maria makes all A's.**
 Fact
 Opinion
7. **This pizza is delicious.**
 Fact
 Opinion
8. **I will finish before you do.**
 Fact
 Opinion
9. **The Maple Leafs are better than your team because they won the game.**
 Fact
 Opinion
10. **You cannot divide 17 by 5 equally.**
 Fact
 Opinion

Challenge: How could you rewrite the opinion statements to make it clear that they are opinions, not facts?





Activity Sheet 2

Cause and Effect

Name: _____

Directions: Consider the far-reaching effects caused by a single event.

Event: _____

	Effect →	Effect →	Effect →	Effect →
1.	→	→	→	→
2.	→	→	→	→
3.	→	→	→	→
4.	→	→	→	→
5.	→	→	→	→

Think About It:

Were any effects personal? Local?
National? Global?
Were any effects positive?

Write About It:

How have things changed?
How are things the same?
What are some positive changes at home,
at school or in the community?



The Fundamental Principles of The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can only be one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

The Fundamental Principles were proclaimed by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross, Vienna, 1965. This is the revised text contained in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, adopted by the XXVth International Conference of the Red Cross, Geneva, 1986.