

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT ISRAEL

Below are some suggested tips for parents and educators from Leanne Matlow*. As the conflict is dynamic, so must be our responses.

- 1. Take care of yourself and your own mental health first.**
(Take media breaks, go for a walk, stick to a routine with proper eating and sleeping.) It is okay to ask for help from colleagues, or friends when you need a break.
- 2. Remember your kids/students are always watching and listening to you and how you react.**
Be mindful of the emotional impact of your words and actions.
- 3. Set boundaries on the news consumption in your house, especially around your kids.**
This is an opportunity to talk about critical thinking and bias in the world of social media.
- 4. Are your children/students hungry or tired?**
Very simple, but before you speak to your children about anything difficult, check on their physical needs first. It will not be helpful to have a potentially stressful discussion unless everyone is calm before you begin.
- 5. Understand your child's/student's level of knowledge and comprehension.**
Take cues from your child and let them lead. Ask open-ended questions. "Please share with me what you've heard and how are you feeling about it?" Avoid jumping in with a lecture or giving more information that they are unaware of or are not asking for.
- 6. Reassure your child/student that they are safe here.**
Clarify where the conflict is happening. If you don't know the answer to a question, it is okay to say that you will get the information and answer them later.
- 7. It's okay to be lenient and reassuring, but don't set a precedent that is not sustainable.**
- 8. Take what your children/students are worried about and turn it into action-oriented tasks.** Brainstorm practical ideas about what you can do to feel hopeful and helpful.
- 9. Ensure that your child/student has access to talk to you and that you are there to listen empathetically.** Set a time for this discussion which should NOT be as children are getting into bed.

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