



ERIE COUNTY, NY  
**SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



# Homeland Security Bulletin

Vol. 2 Number 2 - March 2005

## Resilience in Time of War:

### Tips for Parents & Teachers of Elementary School Students

- Seize the opportunity to teach your children that substance use is never a healthy response to stress.
- Talk with your children. When they have questions, answer them honestly, simply, and with reassurance. Ask them what they think is happening and listen to their answers. Don't discount their feelings. Use black-and-white language that leaves no room for doubt, such as "I will always take care of you."
- Make your home a safe place emotionally for your children. Spend lots of family time with them, especially during a time of war. (Spend more time with your children playing games, reading with them, or just holding them close.)
- Limit the amount of news your children watch. Monitor your children's Internet usage to ensure that they aren't going to sites that will give gory or sensationalized accounts of war.
- Realize that the stress of war may heighten daily stresses. They may respond with anger or bad behavior to stress that normally wouldn't rattle them. Reassure them that you just expect them to do their best.
- Children are reassured by regular schedules. Map out a routine and stick to it. Your child may be less able to handle change at home when the world situation is unstable.
- Make sure you take care of yourself. You may have less patience at a time when your children need both to reassure them. Many people find that turning to a higher power, whether through organized religion or privately, can help.
- Children want to know that they will be all right. Reassure them that they will be protected. Have an emergency plan for the family and share it with them. Share with them the

emergency plans their schools have and prepare them. If your children have family in the military, help them to understand that this is their family member's job, just like their job is to go to school.

- Watch your children for signs of fear and anxiety (they may not be able to put into words.) Have your children become extra clingy, needing more hugs and kisses than usual? Have their grades suddenly dropped? Encourage them to write stories or draw pictures that show how they feel if they can't put their feelings into words.
- Enlist your children's help. Make sure your children know how their actions contribute to the entire family's well-being. If your children knows that they have roles to play, and that they can help, they will feel more in control and more confident.
- Put thing in a positive perspective for your children. Tell them that wars end. Point out times when your children have faced up to and conquered something frightening whether it was fear of the dark or entering a new classroom for the first time. When talking about bad times, make sure you talk about the good things in the future as well.

## *The Upstate Center for Trauma and Prevention Resources (UCTPR)*

"Tips for Parents and Teachers of Elementary School Students" is part of the UCTPR Series The Connection between Trauma and Substance Use, Abuse and Addiction a program of the Council on Alcoholism and other Chemical Dependencies of the Finger Lakes.

Funding for this project was provided by the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services under a grant from the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of SAMHSA. Material was adapted from the American Psychological Association.

For more information, visit the webpage at: <http://www.trauma-and-alcoholism.com>