

# **"Mummy, what is an invasion?"**

**How to help your child make sense  
of world events**

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## **Should we protect kids from the news?**

**YES**, as much as you can and is realistic. Keep a tight boundary on the conversations they may overhear at home and words that may be confusing or distressing to them.

**Between the ages of 0-8yr** children will struggle making sense of concepts such as death and War. Their brains are still developing abstract thinking and they blur reality with fantasy.

**From 8yr onwards** children have an understanding that War can lead to people dying. They may learn about War in history at school.

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# **What if they hear something?**

**Lean in and open up the conversation**

**When children ask a question it means they have already considered an answer.**

**Having this conversation is less about giving answers to your child and more about getting curious about:**

- **What they have heard/they know**
- **What they understand**
- **How they feel**
- **What their fears/worries are**
- **How you will support them and keep them safe**

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## **A brief guide on talking about big topics:**

- Stay honest (**ALWAYS!**)
- Keep it simple (age appropriate!)
- Normalise all feelings (your child's and your own)
- Be lead by their questions and give them opportunities to ask
- Reassure your child of their safety with you

**Remember this:**

**You do not need to have all the answers**

**Listening and offering a safe space for your child to make sense of their experience is the most important**

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# **How do I answer things I don't know/understand?**

**"Will there be a world war?" is a question some kids have asked their parents today (I know - I have heard it!)**

**Do we know the answer? No.  
Can we respond in a way that feels safe to our children? YES!**

**"This is a big question. I wonder whether you are feeling a little bit scared? If you are - that's normal. I feel scared too. I don't know the answer but I know we are safe right now. What would help you feel safe tomorrow when this question pops up in your head again? What can I do?"**

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## **How do I explain what 'war' is?**

**Children 8yr-12 upwards** may have an idea of what war is. They are likely to have heard the words 'invasion' , 'army', 'soldiers' and 'war' in history class.

**Go with their starting point.**

- **What do they know?**
- **Where have they heard about it?**
- **How does it make them feel?**

**Teenagers** will have an understanding of what war means and have information at their fingertips. They may benefit from protected time with you to talk through the news. Be curious about what they have heard and where (i.e. social media? Youtube? Friends/teachers?) and share reliable, accurate information in line with their concerns/worries. Keeping open channels of communication is the most important here.

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# **Look after you**

**What is happening in the world is affecting all of us.**

**An attack on any country is an attack on humanity.**

**Make sure you do whatever you and your body needs to feel safe and contained.**

**Talk to safe others, move, rest, and notice how much news and information you are consuming.**

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## **Take action**

**You may wish to take action. If your child is old enough and you feel it is appropriate, you could invite them to join in this OR share with them what steps you have taken.**

**(E.g. They could sign their name to the letter for your MP and/or choose what charity to contribute donations to)**

**Taking positive steps brings hope to children and offers them a good model of how to problem-solve in difficult situations and gain a sense of agency.**

**Some ideas of how to take action are on the next slide**

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## **How you can help**

### **Voices of Children**

[www.voices.org.ua/en/](http://www.voices.org.ua/en/)

Charitable organisation offering psychological therapy and support to overcome the effects of war

### **Sunflower of Peace**

Working on the ground that helps paramedics and doctors access supplies and medical first aid

### **United Help Ukraine**

[www.unitedhelpukraine.org](http://www.unitedhelpukraine.org)

### **The British Redcross Emergency Appeal**

[www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)

### **Writing to your MP**

[www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) for info

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