

# Dr. Elizabeth R. Henry Gives Advice to Parents on Talking to Their Kids About the Riots and COVID-19

*Dr. Liz advises parents to take the five steps to support their children through these trying times.*

SOMERSET, NJ, USA, June 12, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Elizabeth R. Henry (Dr. Liz), founder of Dr. Liz Consulting, a practice focused on empowering parents and uplifting youth, advises parents on how they should talk to their kids about the riots and the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Your kids need the time and space to process what’s happening around them,” explains Dr. Liz. “They have heard about and perhaps seen a graphic video of George Floyd being killed by a police officer. They are seeing protests break out in major cities across America. They are hearing about racial injustices, inequality, and calls for police reform. All this is happening when they are also coping with COVID-19 and social distancing.”



Dr. Liz

“Kids are secluded from their peers as they are being home schooled during the pandemic,” says Dr. Liz. “Their family may be devastated by death or job loss and economic insecurity. They are stressed, anxious, and uncertain about the future.”

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*Dr. Liz*

“Life for kids, as for all of us, has significantly changed,” adds Dr. Liz. “It’s unpredictable, uncertain, and dangerous. Kids inevitably are going to have emotional issues that parents are going to have to deal with.”

Dr. Liz advises parents to take the following five steps to support their children through these trying times.

## 1. EMBRACE YOUR CHILDREN

Let your children know that at the end of the day you love them unconditionally no matter what.

You can do this with a physical hug, saying "I love you," acknowledging an accomplishment, or just letting them know in some way that you care.

Having children feel and know that they are loved and accepted unconditionally counteracts a feeling of being isolated and alone. Parents may be angry and frustrated with something they've done that day or with current events, but it's important for kids to know that you love and accept them despite it all.

## 2. GIVE THEM PERMISSION TO FEEL

Kids' feelings are valid so give them permission to have them. We are all busy and under a great deal of pressure, but make sure you make time to sit down and individually connect with your children.

Carve out time to give your children your undivided attention to encourage them to talk about what's on their mind. Let them know that it's alright to feel confused, angry, disappointed, sad, or lonely. Embracing their feelings will help them process their emotions.

## 3. HONOR THE SILENCES

Embrace the awkward silences. The silent moments leave space for thoughts to arise that will naturally facilitate conversation.

Sometimes just being in each other's presence is enough to create the connection your child needs to feel safe and loved. Make sure this time is spent headphone free.

## 4. LISTEN

As parents, your instinct is to fix things for your children and to protect them. You want to make things better for them as quickly as possible. It's so easy to jump in and tell them what they should or should not do or how they should feel, but there is a cost. When you do that, your children don't think you are really listening to them and most of the time they are right.

You think you are listening but you're really not. You're waiting for your kids to stop talking, so you can give your opinion. As they are talking, you're thinking about what you are going to say before you have fully heard their thoughts.

The key is to listen for the sake of listening. Listen without judging or trying to fix or make things better. Your kids need to share what's REALLY going on with them and they can't do that if you interrupt them or are not truly hearing what they are saying.

Let them talk, cry, and vent. Children need to feel that it is okay to express their emotions freely. Answer their questions but don't give them more than what they ask for. Keep it simple for younger kids. Let their questions guide the conversation.

## 5. BE VULNERABLE

Don't be afraid to share your concerns or worries but do so in ways that are appropriate to the age of your child. It's okay to tell your six-year-old that you're sad about someone dying. It's okay to tell your teenager that you're scared about the current state of the world. This teaches your children that you too are human and helps them learn how to process their emotions.

Sharing as part of a conversation opens the space for them to share their challenges with you. It sparks conversations and creates connections which foster healthy parent/child relationships.

These are challenging times, but you can't shy away from the hard topics. You must talk about what is going on in the world to prepare them to deal with the various obstacles and challenges that come their way.

Issues like racism, death, violence, and illness must be dealt with truthfully without overwhelming your children with information. Try to limit their exposure to the news cycles on the television, computer, or social media so they are not bombarded with graphic or frightening images. Creating honest and open dialogue is essential for guiding them through these unprecedented times. Dr. Liz can be contacted at 732-873-1021 or [DrLiz@DrLizConsulting.com](mailto:DrLiz@DrLizConsulting.com).

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