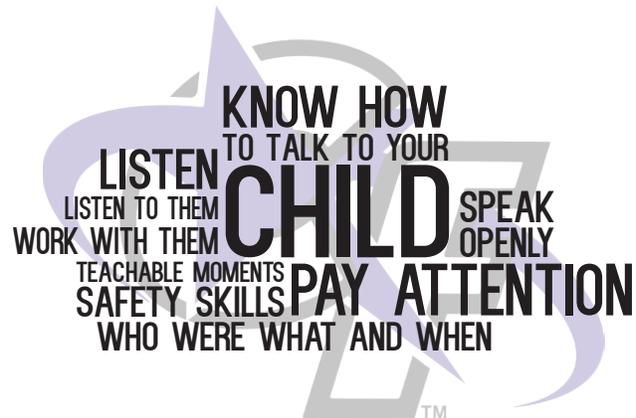
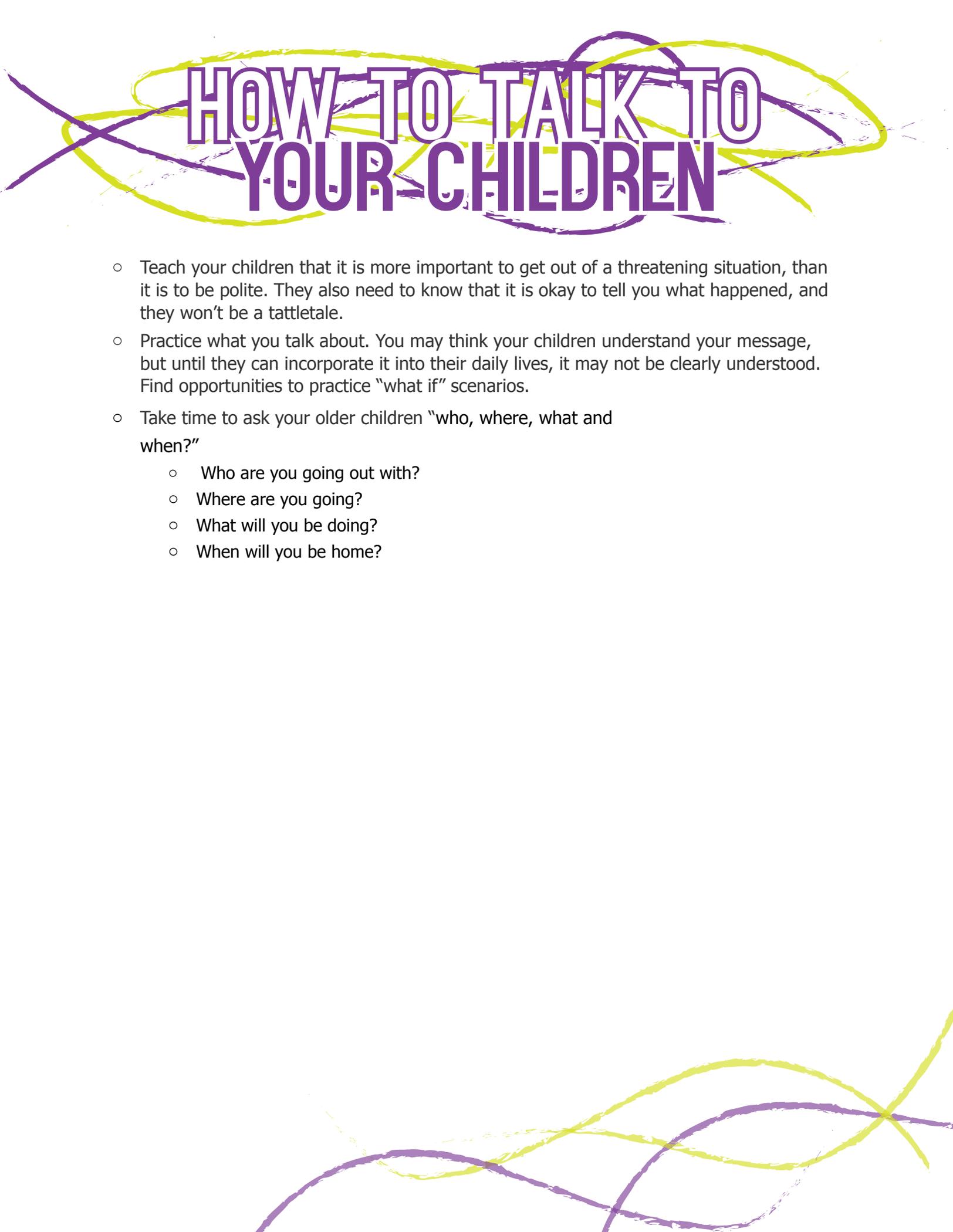


HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

- When you speak to your children, do so in a calm, non-threatening manner. Children do not need to be frightened to get the point across. Fear can actually interfere with the safety message, because fear can be paralyzing to a child.
- Speak openly about safety issues. Children will be less likely to come to you if the issue is enshrouded in secrecy. If they feel that you are comfortable discussing the subject matter, they may be more forthcoming with you. Encourage them to tell you or a trusted adult if anyone or anything makes them feel frightened, confused, or uncomfortable.
- Listen to your children. Pay attention if they tell you that they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.
- Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude. Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener. Look and listen to small cues and clues that something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems.
- If your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm, non-critical, and nonjudgmental. Listen compassionately to their concerns, and work **with them** to get the help they need to resolve a problem.
- Notice when someone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts. Take the time to talk to your children about the person and find out why the person is acting in this way.
- Parents should choose opportunities or "teachable" moments to reinforce safety skills. If an incident occurs in your community, and your child asks you about it, speak frankly but with reassurance. Explain to your children that you want to discuss the safety rules with them, so that they will know what to do if they are ever confronted with a difficult situation. Make sure you have "safety nets" in place, so that your children know there is **always** someone who can help them.





HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

- Teach your children that it is more important to get out of a threatening situation, than it is to be polite. They also need to know that it is okay to tell you what happened, and they won't be a tattletale.
- Practice what you talk about. You may think your children understand your message, but until they can incorporate it into their daily lives, it may not be clearly understood. Find opportunities to practice "what if" scenarios.
- Take time to ask your older children "who, where, what and when?"
 - Who are you going out with?
 - Where are you going?
 - What will you be doing?
 - When will you be home?