

# THE TRIAL OF THE NICE ATTACK

## To the attention of the relatives and carers of the children who were direct and indirect victims and bereaved relatives of the Nice attack of 14 July 2016

The trial of the Nice attack of July 14, 2016 begins on September 5, 2022. It is expected to last almost four months. As a parent or relative of a child who was a direct or indirect victim or a bereaved relative of the Nice attack, you and the child are concerned by this event which is attracting the attention of public opinion and the media. It is therefore important to be attentive to your child's needs and to protect him/her if necessary.

### Should the trial be discussed with the child?

It is not surprising that the child will hear about it in any case : via the media, especially social networks for older children, with his or her friends at school or college, by overhearing a conversation between adults at home or outside. It is better to anticipate and explain that the justice system is trying to understand what happened, to identify the culprits and to render justice. It is also important to explain that this is a long process because it is necessary for everything to be clear and for the victims to be able to testify if they want to. It is not useful to go into details but to tell the truth and stick to the facts.

If the child does not look at you during the explanations, it is ok : faced with difficult or worrying information, a child may prefer to look away or continue doing something else while remaining attentive. On the other hand, if they change the subject or go off to play, they may want to protect themselves and not be ready to talk about it at the moment. It is important not to push and simply tell them that if something is bothering them, they can always come and talk to you about it.

### What if they are exposed to images of the attack on TV or the internet ?

If we are in the room with him, it is better to take the lead and talk about it right away. If we are not with him, we can also wait for him to talk about it and then listen to him to understand what he understands, what he has seen and let him express what he feels: fear? Anguish ? Anger ? Grief ? If he seems confused and cannot speak, we can also reassure him that it is usual to feel several emotions at the same time, that he can talk about it whenever he wants. We can also express what we feel and leave the door open for another exchange : «we can talk about it later if you want and when you want, I'm here for you».

When faced with questions, it is possible to say that we do not know everything. It is important to always answer his/her questions but we can also give ourselves time to think («I heard you well and we'll talk about it later») but also to give ourselves time to sort out our own emotions in order to choose our words well. It is natural that our emotions come out too, but we should try to speak calmly and soothe.

Teenagers, on the other hand, may be confronted with an unfiltered flow of information on their mobile phones. They

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may be more reluctant to speak out, but it is important to leave the door open for discussion «I'm here for you if you want to talk about it». It is also an opportunity to talk about the importance of protecting oneself from too many images and too much information for one's own good : we don't have to watch everything. These violent images can sometimes provoke a kind of fascination or even addiction which is not without risk in the long run. It would then be advisable to talk to a psychologist to better understand the basis of this.

## **My child wants to attend the trial, is this a good idea ?**

In practice, a minor victim can be heard by the High Court. In practice, this requires that they are considered to be «discerning». The minimum age depends on the judgement of the president of the assizes court, but it can be assumed that from the age of 8 or 9 years onwards, this is possible. Minors can also attend the trial, both in Paris and in Nice. The hearing can take place in Paris, or in Nice by videoconference from the Nice court (and not the Acropolis room, which is a broadcasting room without interaction). On the other hand, it is up to each family to judge whether attending the trial is a constructive experience for the child. This may depend on the age and maturity of the child and whether he or she has already experienced psychological problems as a result of the attack. The younger the child and the more disturbed he or she has been, the more caution should be exercised. However, if the child expresses a strong desire to attend, refusing to do so may be disturbing, as the imagined trial may be more stressful than the reality. In any case, it is a good idea for both parents and children to work with their psychologist beforehand to help them as much

as possible if they decide to go. If the child participates, it would be good to explain to him/her how a trial works and explain that he/she can sometimes feel fear and stress at the mention of the attack but that he/she can also go out/take a break/stop following the trial. Secondly, before making up one's mind, it is advisable to pay attention to the general atmosphere of the trial. The victims' aid associations in Paris and Nice (PAV and Montjoye) have prepared leaflets and a video that can be used by adults to present the trial to children.

## **want to attend the four-month trial in Paris. Who should I contact to ensure that my child is not taken out of school during this time ?**

If your child goes to school in France, the best thing to do is to contact the DSDEN, the Direction des services départementaux de l'Education nationale of your department, and the headmaster of the child's school to be accompanied in his or her schooling and advised on the steps to be taken according to his or her level and situation.

## **What do we answer if he asks «Why did the defendants do this ?» ?**

We can answer that it is a difficult question because we do not know and the trial is also there to try to answer it at least in part, according to the elements available to justice. We will not be able to know all the motives of the terrorist because he is dead. We can also tell him that many people are asking the same questions as him so that he knows that he is not alone with his questions and his incomprehensions, that all this violence is incomprehensible for the vast majority of people.

## How can you tell if the trial is disturbing him ?

You should be aware of any changes in his habits : sleep, appetite, stomach aches, aggressiveness, withdrawal, addiction to certain scenes etc. The child's way of playing may also change with themes related to the event and without apparent pleasure. The child may relive the attack without wanting to in the form of nightmares, flashes, thoughts. They may also be on constant alert. They may refuse to go to school or sleep alone. They may wet his bed. They may also lack interest in things that used to interest them, have problems with attention and concentration. His school results may fall. He or she may also complain more frequently of headaches and stomach aches, sometimes requiring medical attention. These signs should alert you : it is time to make an appointment with a health professional.



### *Caring checklist*

- **Help the child to feel safe: they may need more of your time, care and comfort for a while.**
- **Help the child to relax, for example by doing breathing exercises such as breathing in and out slowly on each of their 5 fingers as if they were blowing out birthday candles.**
- **Doing enjoyable things together: playing, drawing, dancing, listening to music, walking etc.**
- **Reassure the child that it will get better and that you are there for him/her.**
- **Consult a health professional, and in the first instance the paediatrician who follows the child, as soon as warning signs of discomfort appear.**
- **Warn the teacher that the child is going through a difficult period and may have difficulty concentrating.**



## Useful contacts

### France:

[Obtenir de l'aide pour soi ou pour un proche - site du Cn2r and Réseau France victimes](#)

2 hot/helplines specifically dedicated to victims concerned by the trial of the 14 July 2016 attack (Paris Court of Appeal); practical information:

[proces@pav75.fr](mailto:proces@pav75.fr) - +33 6 35 18 99 60 - and psychological assistance line: +33 6 75 77 59 23

### Nice and surroundings:

- **Centre régional du psychotrauma, adult (CRP)**  
CHU de Nice – Hôpital Pasteur I et II  
To make an appointment: +33 4 92 03 33 35  
[crppacacorse-pasteur1@chu-nice.fr](mailto:crppacacorse-pasteur1@chu-nice.fr)
- **Centre d'accueil psychiatrique, urgences psychiatriques, adult (CAP)**  
CHU de Nice – Hôpital Pasteur II,  
Contact: +33 4 92 03 33 58 / +33 4 92 03 33 59
- **Centre d'évaluation pédiatrique du psychotraumatisme, children and teenager (CE2P)**  
Hôpital Universitaire Pédiatrique - Fondation Lenal  
To make an appointment: +33 4 92 03 00 66  
[ce2p@pediatrie-chulenal-nice.fr](mailto:ce2p@pediatrie-chulenal-nice.fr)
- **Association Montjoye, information and support for victims**  
Contact : +33 4 92 00 08 18  
[contact@eianice.org](mailto:contact@eianice.org)