



"All of a sudden, home is where all the food is. The media are waiting outside, and people have left flowers there. Home is where the craziness is." – Marcus

"No one explained to me what happened. I came home from school and everyone was sitting in the living room being quiet. No one told me what was going on." – Trevor

Dorothy said it in *The Wizard of Oz*: There's no place like home. But home, as you have always known it, has changed. Your home may be full of people: family, friends, media, and law enforcement. People may just walk through the front door without knocking. They may walk all over your house, even in your own room. In fact, it may no longer feel like *your* home, and that's a very unsettling feeling.

Most of us feel best when things stay the same, when we are surrounded by familiar things and people. But home can now seem like an unfamiliar place.

Your thoughts and feelings about your missing brother or sister may bring up a lot of questions.

QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE:

- Is home still "home" without my sibling there?
- Do we still sit at the same places at the table?
- Can I still borrow my sibling's clothes or toys?
- What do we do on my missing sibling's birthday? Do we just ignore it?
- How do I answer the phone if it's for my missing brother or sister?
- What should we do with their mail?
- What about his or her room? Can I still go in there to find something? What if the police have blocked it off? Will it upset my parents if I go in there like I usually would?
- The police took some of the things that we shared—the computer, clothes, even a hairbrush. Will we ever get them back?

There may not be good answers to all of these questions. You probably have a million more questions. It's perfectly natural to have them, and it's okay to ask them. Your parents may not have the answers, either. Remember, this situation is new and unfamiliar to them, too. Sometimes it helps just to ask the questions out loud rather than keeping them bottled up inside.

Here are some other things you can do:

- Be patient. Things may not go back to the way they were before, but they may not keep feeling so strange, either.
- Sometimes home feels too intense. You may need to get away for a little while. Ask if you can spend a night sleeping over at a friend's house.
- Spend time with friends. Go for a bike ride. Go with your friends to the mall. Whatever you do, make sure to tell your parents where you are going so they don't worry about you.

- Don't be too hard on yourself or your family. Try to relax, even though it's a tough situation.
- Do something to take your mind off things. Read. Listen to music. Watch a video or a DVD. Go for a run.
- Try to do things that give your life structure. Join a club. Sign up for an afterschool activity. Keep a daily journal. Try out for a sport. Decide you're going to work out 3 days a week. Do something good for you.



It can be really upsetting when your house is taken over by strangers and you feel like you don't have any privacy. When you feel like your life is being invaded, it's important to have some space of your own.

- Talk with your parents about needing some space of your own. Find a place in your house—a safe place just for you—that everyone else knows is off limits. No one can come in unless you say so.
- Hang a sign on your bedroom door that says “This is my personal space: keep out!” Know that while you're in your own space, you can think anything you want and feel anything you want.
- Think about a place where you've always felt happy, like the beach or your grandmother's house on Thanksgiving. Think about what it looks like and how it smells and tastes. Just traveling there in your mind may be comforting for a while.