

How teenagers are coping with September 11

Teenagers from New York share their experience of the terrorist attack on their city with young reporters from Belfast.

Young people in Northern Ireland are, sadly, all too familiar with the devastating effects of civil unrest. But how have young people in New York reacted to the September 11 terrorist attacks on their city? Reporters from Children's Express in Belfast have talked to teenagers from the Big Apple.

You could argue Belfast teenagers are used to dealing with disaster. After all, the city has seen its fair share of trouble. The whole city froze, you couldn't get anywhere. It was amazing that the emergency response was so fast.

The same couldn't be said for Asia Jackson (17). She was left stranded when the first plane struck the Twin Towers.

As people in the city began to panic, all streets were blocked off and the subways closed:

"The whole city froze, you couldn't get anywhere. It was amazing that the emergency response was so fast. The subway trains were up and running that night," she said.

The physical rebuilding of the city is now well underway, however the psychological aftermath has been more difficult to clear up:

"New York teenagers were really depressed by the bombing," said Tomica Kipp, also 17.

"I have friends who lost family members. It's really difficult for them to recall the actual event itself. They've had to go to counselling to overcome their fears," she said.

Many European commentators have criticised the American media for reacting too patriotically, but Ms Kipp defends them saying they've helped in New York's process of healing:

"I think the media actually took people's fears into consideration. For instance, people whose family members had gone missing got news companies to put their pictures on television. This played a big part in helping deal with the tragedy."

But Kibushi Bansfield (14) believes this increased patriotism, along with daily television images of Muslim terrorists, have helped fuel racist fears.

"It can't be easy being Muslim here. It's hard to look at them and then see similar faces flashed on the television screens accused of bombing us."

Although, she admitted: "I know it's nothing to do with ordinary Muslims and they're not the same type of person inside."

Some Muslim groups in New York have gone as far as organising rallies to show solidarity with America's position.

About the team

This story was produced by Orlaith Graham Wood, 13, Michael Leathem, 15, Sheena Hall, 14, Amanda McAteer, 14 and Thomas Kieilty, 16. It was published in the [Belfast Telegraph](#).

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