

Supporting children and young people in response to the Bourke Street tragedy

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The Bourke Street tragedy occurred on 20 January 2017. Although some time has passed, the event will continue to have a significant impact on many people around Australia.

Incidents like this tragedy are seemingly random, unexpected and challenge our sense of safety and predictability. When these incidents occur, our core sense of safety can be shaken. Even children and young adults share this sense of unease after an incident as public as the Bourke Street tragedy.

Responses in infants, children and young people

Your child may not be saying they are worried, but you might notice some changes in their behaviour.

They may find it harder to:

- separate from you to go to child care, kindergarten or school
- sleep alone, fall asleep or stay asleep
- concentrate and settle to an activity or task.

We know that there are many young people who were in the city that day and heard and saw the shocking events, or who have seen coverage in the media or even know of someone who was affected, leaving them feeling unsafe.

If you yourself have been affected by the incident, your child is likely to feel less safe and be aware of your distress.

Partnering with your child's school

Child care, kindergartens, and schools are an important part of the life of children.

Like you, child care workers, teachers and principals might be noticing subtle changes in the way your child is coping at school and in the playground, but may not know what has caused these changes.

If your child has been affected by the Bourke Street tragedy, then it's important to let their child care worker, teacher or principal know. This will allow them to support your child and to understand the changes in your child's behaviour.

The Department of Education and Training has psychologists and social work staff who are able to support your child at school and work with your child to help them return to feeling safe and confident.

Let your child's child care worker, teacher or principal know if you or your child has been affected by this tragedy.