

The tragedy of the Connecticut shootings. 17th December 2012

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Professor Beverley Raphael and the Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network (ACATLGN), wish to convey great sadness over the mass shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, which led to the deaths of 20 young children, their teachers and others. We all extend our wishes and condolences during this tragic time. We also recognize the great courage of both those who have died and those who have survived. Parents, families and communities will be experiencing grief, sadness, anger and helplessness.

Tragic incidents often lead us to be touched once more by our own traumas, our own losses, our own grief and these are often brought to the surface again by such experiences. So it is an important time to recognize this grief and to comfort one another or even to seek help if the distress is very great.

For children here in Australia, it is a time to think about what impact this tragic news may have for them. Now, in a time when there is such access to the internet, news, media and social media, children and young people are often repeatedly exposed to tragedies, disasters and the horrors that they bring. Young children can be especially affected by media coverage and school age children may feel frightened or concerned for their own safety. Limiting children's exposure to media can help, as can making sure that parents, carers and families spend time talking to their children, answering questions and providing information that is age appropriate.

The challenge for us is to find ways to prevent such violence, to offer hope for the future for those who suffer so tragically.

ACATLGN provides information on the impact that trauma has on children and young people through its two websites. Parents, carers and families can find further information on the Trauma and Grief Network website:

www.tgn.anu.edu.au

Professionals can find further information on the ACATLGN website

www.earlytraumagrieff.anu.edu.au