

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mental health support for people impacted by the Bondi attack

The peak body for all psychologists, the Australian Association of Psychologists (AAPi), extends its deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in the horrific tragedy in Bondi last night.

“Our hearts go out to Jewish communities around the country. We strongly condemn this display of hatred, violence and anti-Semitism and we stand in solidarity with this community, who are once again carrying the weight of grief, fear and intergenerational trauma in the aftermath of this violence,” said AAPi Executive Director, Tegan Carrison.

“We wish all those directly impacted a full recovery and express our gratitude to the first responders and other community members who bravely attended the incident.”

“At the same time, we acknowledge the broader distress being felt by many members of our community, including children, families, practitioners and first responders.

“For the thousands of people whose mental health will be impacted by this attack - whether they were directly or indirectly involved - we want them to know there is support available.”

Ms Carrison said the mental health impacts of this horrific event on the Australian community would be far-reaching and encouraged anyone struggling to reach out for help.

AAPi President Sahra O’Doherty said connecting with loved ones and supporting one another was crucial at this time.

“In a tragedy that has tried to divide the community, connecting with the community is more important than ever,” she said.

AAPi Director, Rachel Samson, said there was a growing, collective sense of unease and grief after recent and ongoing events, including last year’s Bondi Junction attack and the Gaza war.

“Understandably, the entire community is really grappling with this form of hatred and anti-Semitism being part of our society,” she said.

Ms Samson said it was vital for people to prioritise caring for each other and connecting with others in real life at this time.

“It’s also important to remember to limit exposure to all forms of media given we are being flooded with images from the attack. Too much exposure can increase your sense of anxiety or threat.”

Ms Carrison encouraged anyone struggling with their feelings about the incident to reach out for support.

A list of national crisis resources can be found on the AAPi website [here](#).

ADVICE FOR CHILDREN

From Daniela McCann, Director, AAPi and child psychologist

Daniela said: “It’s natural for children to feel unsettled after hearing about something frightening. The best thing parents can do is to listen, answer questions honestly but gently, and reassure children about their safety. Keeping routines and limiting exposure to distressing news can help.

“If parents notice ongoing distress, it’s important to seek professional support.”

1. Acknowledge children’s awareness and feelings

- Children are likely to have heard about the event through news, social media, or peers. It’s important for parents to recognise that children may have questions or worries.
- I encourage parents to be open to conversations and to validate their child’s feelings, whether that’s fear, sadness, confusion, or anger.

2. Tailor conversations to the child’s age and development

- Young children (preschool/early primary): Give simple, honest explanations. Avoid graphic details. Reassure them about their safety and the actions adults take to protect them.
- Older children and teens - they may seek more detailed information and have complex emotions. Encourage discussion, correct misinformation, and talk about broader issues of safety and community response. This may include information on Australia’s gun laws, extreme groups and religious persecution.

3. Allow children to ask questions

- Let children lead the conversation where possible. Answer questions truthfully but in an age-appropriate way.

- It's okay to admit you don't have all the answers, but model to older children in particular how to find information from reputable sources, rather than sensationalist sites.

4. Reassure safety

- Emphasise the rarity of such events and the steps being taken by authorities to keep everyone safe.
- Discuss the role of police, emergency services, and community helpers.

5. Limit media exposure

- Monitor and limit children's exposure to news and social media coverage, which can be distressing and repetitive (there is a lot of footage online).

6. Maintain routine

- Keep normal routines as much as possible. Predictable schedules help children feel secure, but stay away from police or emergency service operations.

7. Watch for signs of distress

- Look for changes in behaviour, sleep, appetite, or mood. If these persist, consider seeking support from professionals.

8. Encourage positive action

- Suggest ways families can show support, such as sending messages of thanks to first responders.
- Focusing on kindness and community can help children feel empowered (e.g. donate to support victims, either in person if you are a local, or via online).

9. Take care of yourself

- Parents and carers, your own emotional state affects your children. It's okay for adults to seek support too.