



FOUNTAIN GATE
SECONDARY COLLEGE

COPING WITH COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

As the impact of the tragic events in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday continues to unfold, our thoughts are with the victims and their families.

One of Victoria's greatest strengths is its history of multiculturalism. We are extremely proud of the diversity within our schools and early childhood settings. Melbourne has a large Sri Lankan population and this is reflected in our schools and their communities

It is common to think about the safety and predictability of the world when tragedies such as the Christchurch incident occur. Members of our community, particularly young people and children may have been impacted by the footage and images available. Below are some guidelines to helping individuals cope with the distressing event.

Reactions are influenced by many factors:

- Knowing someone impacted.
- Identifying with the victims and survivors.
- Seeing and hearing terrifying images and discussions.

The developmental age of the person influences what they understand and how they respond. Some may be unaware, others will be following all the discussions and media coverage, looking for understanding.

What to say and how to care

Here are some ways you can make children and young people feel safe:

- Give reassurance that the incident is over.
- Keep to routines, as they are reassuring.
- Have time to listen and talk. Listen to concerns and worries and discuss strategies for feeling safe, dealing with worry and being able to take action. This helps in repairing safety and calm.
- Give a calm response to their concerns.
- Keep your explanations appropriate for their age and development. Start at their starting point: ask what the child/young person understands about what has happened and what their key worry is. Each child will have a different understanding and will find different parts of what has happened frightening or worrying.
- Reduce exposure to media coverage and conversations that are distressing and not age-appropriate.
- Monitor their emotional state. Changes in behaviour, appetite and sleep can be an indicator of anxiety or worry. Young children often express worry through bodily aches and pains.

Further information is available at [Supporting children and young people with distressing events](#) on the State Government of Victoria website.