

Supporting children and young people during school holidays following the Bondi Beach attack

Many children, families and communities continue to feel the impact of the Bondi Beach attack. It is common for children to have worries, questions, or changes in their behaviour following a distressing event, even months later.

Recovery is different for everyone

Some children and young people may show signs of distress immediately, while others may experience changes weeks or months later.

Behaviour change is often a child's way of communicating that they are struggling with something they cannot yet put into words.

Parents know their children best

If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts and seek support early.

- Children and young people may be affected by events they witnessed directly, experiences within their family or community, concerns about safety and belonging, or ongoing exposure to conversations and media coverage.
- Children and young people express and process distress in different ways. While some children find it helpful to talk, others may communicate through play, movement, creative activities or by spending time with trusted people.
- Support does not always need to involve talking directly about the event.
- School holidays and weekends can be a helpful time for parents to check in and connect with their children and young people.

You do not need to manage concerns alone. Support is available for children, parents and carers at any stage of recovery.

How can I support my child?

Create regular opportunities to talk, listen without judgement, and gently check in. This could include during car journeys, while going for a walk together, or while playing. Behaviour is often a child's way of communicating that they are struggling with something they cannot yet put into words.

If changes persist, worsen, or are impacting your child's wellbeing, consider:

- connecting with your child's childcare centre or preschool
- connecting with the wellbeing team at school
- talking to your family GP
- contacting or visiting a support service (details provided on the next page).

When should I seek additional support?

Consider seeking support if you notice changes in your child's behaviour, emotions, sleep, eating, relationships or daily activities that:

- persist for several weeks
- become more intense over time
- are causing significant distress
- are affecting school, family life or friendships
- raise concerns about safety or wellbeing.

What supports are available?

Support is available for children, young people, parents and carers at any stage of recovery. Depending on their needs, children may benefit from support provided by health professionals, schools, cultural or community supports, and activities that promote wellbeing. Support does not always need to involve talking directly about difficult experiences.

For support and guidance

- Contact your family GP or healthcare provider.
- Kids Helpline (ages 5 to 25): 1800 55 1800.
- headspace: 1800 650 890 (for young people aged 12–25 and their families) or visit your nearest headspace centre.
- Jewish House: 1300 544 357 (24/7 support).
- Jewish Care: 1300 133 660.
- Bondi Medicare Mental Health Centre: (02) 9095 4300.

If you have more acute concerns for someone in distress

- NSW Mental Health Line 24/7: Call 1800 011 511.
- Attend your local hospital emergency department.

For emergencies call Triple Zero (000).

For additional mental health and wellbeing services related to the Bondi incident, visit: nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/bondi-beach-attack/mental-health-support

There is no set timeline for recovery. Some children and young people show signs of distress soon after a traumatic event, while others may experience changes weeks or months later. Significant dates, reminders, media coverage or life transitions can sometimes bring up feelings again. Support can be helpful at any stage of recovery.

Understanding how children and young people respond to traumatic events

Age and Stage	Early Childhood 0-5 years	Middle Childhood 6-11 years	Adolescence 12-18 years
How they may experience the event	• May not fully understand what happened • May be strongly affected by sights, sounds and other experiences • Rely on trusted adults for safety	• More aware of what happened • May blame themselves • Worrying about their loved ones • Look for comfort and reassurance	• Trying to make sense of what happened • May feel invincible, or very vulnerable • Concern about who they are, their future and their relationships
Common responses	• Clinginess, tantrums • Sleep changes or nightmares • Returning to behaviours they had grown out of • Upset when away from parents, carers or trusted adults	• Anxiety and worry • Trouble sleeping • Irritability • Physical symptoms • Trouble concentrating	• Anxiety or low mood • Withdrawing from things they normally enjoy • Anger or irritability • Changes in sleep, appetite or motivation • Risk-taking
What can help	• Calm, consistent adults • Comfort and reassurance • Routine and predictability • Play, songs, stories • Safe, familiar spaces	• Honest explanations suited to their age • Routine and structure • Comfort and reassurance • Opportunities to express feelings • Play and connection	• Honest information • Listening without judgement • Respecting and acknowledging their feelings • Connection with peers • Opportunities to share their views and make choices
What to consider	• Watch for changes such as returning to behaviours they had grown out of • Monitor sleep and eating • Provide extra reassurance	• Reassure them that they are safe • Support their emotions • Keep routines as predictable as possible • Check in with them regularly	• Respect their growing independence • Recognise and talk about stress • Watch for risk-taking behaviours • Encourage asking for help

A supportive, recovery-focused approach

Empower students, staff and community voice.	Provide clear consistent and age-appropriate information.	Maintain routines and restore a sense of normality.	Build connection, belonging and community resilience.	Link to practical, emotional and specialist supports.	Hold hope and focus on strengths and small wins.
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