

## Violent news bad for children

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Credit: Photo taken from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sarahreido/3245498261/>

(Medical Xpress) -- Television coverage of the shooting at a cinema in Colorado last week may traumatize children who watch it, according to a leading psychiatrist at The Australian National University.

Professor Beverly Raphael AM, Chair of the Australian Child and [Adolescent](#) Trauma Loss and Grief Network and head of the Psychological and Addiction Medicine Unit, both at the ANU Medical School, says that limiting children's exposure to television, images and reports of the incident is important.

“Children are very vulnerable in the face of such violence. They are likely to be fearful, anxious and insecure,” Professor Raphael said.

“Simple responses to their questions and reassurance from parents and

carers that they are loved and will be looked after are important during times like this.”

The Colorado massacre, in which 12 people were killed and 58 others injured, will cause ongoing psychological damage not only for the victims and their families but for the wider community Professor Raphael said.

“This is a reminder of the horrendous [trauma](#), loss and grief of the Norwegian massacre in July last year and the 1996 Port Arthur shooting in Tasmania,” she said.

“We need to remember always that some people may already carry the wounds of violence and to look out for them. Most importantly we need to value and build on the positives in our lives, our families, our communities and our societies.”

Professor Raphael said that the most difficult thing for victims is often to try to understand why the event has happened, and there are no easy answers.

“There is much searching for understanding about individuals who take such actions and how we can prevent similar tragedies in the future,” she said.

“The important thing now is to focus on protecting, comforting and caring for those exposed to violence of any type.”

**More information:** For more information about the Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma Loss and Grief Network visit:

[www.earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/](http://www.earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/)

Provided by Australian National University

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