

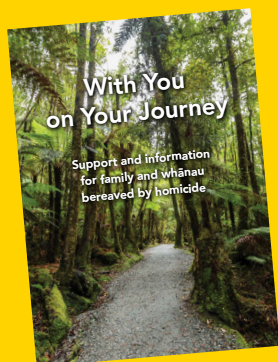
## Welcome to our latest edition of *Connections*.

Earlier this year Victim Support held an event to mark the one year anniversary of our expanded Homicide Service. Minister of Justice, Hon. Kris Faafoi attended, acknowledging the pathway after a homicide for those left behind is disruptive, long lasting, and traumatic.

This issue of *Connections* is focussed on the impact of homicide on children and young people. We hear first-hand from a woman who lost her mother to homicide at a young age. We feature information and advice from a psychotherapist on how to support children and young people who have been affected by trauma. And we feature profiles of two of our newest team members.

Check out the homicide section on our new website which contains a wealth of information and advice <https://victimsupport.org.nz/get-support/homicide>. We also have available online our new, in-depth handbook for homicide victims, *With You on Your Journey*. Look for it under 'homicide' here <https://victimsupport.org.nz/resource-centre>.

And, as always, don't hesitate to call us at any time if you would like support or assistance. ■



## The day my world stopped *A victim tells her story*

### "I was only young when my world stopped, and I lost everything."

My mother was murdered by the man who had been living with and controlling us for only 18 months. Most days we never knew how he was going to be, and the Police and other social service agencies were an all too familiar sight in our home and in our lives.

My mother was such a kind and lovely woman who didn't deserve what happened. But I also know she would want me to be able to move on and forgive him and not be the reason he stays in prison. It is confusing to reconcile those two things with what he did.

My family tell me that on the day it happened I was at my friend's house after school and they protected me and kept me away from the horrible details of what occurred. But I remember it differently. I remember seeing my mother's body and what he did to her.

That was just the beginning of things for me. For a while I stayed with my uncle and aunt. But that didn't work out so next I stayed with my older sister and that didn't work out either. Nothing worked out.

I tried counselling but it didn't work, nothing worked. And I lost my family.

A couple of years ago, I lost another important person in my life – my grandmother. I saw my sister and uncle and aunt around that time and we argued a lot. I feel like things aren't fair, they have everything, and I have nothing. I wrote them a letter, but things only got worse. Now we are estranged, and I have no family apart from my partner.

I am a grown woman now and my mother's death still haunts me. I find it hard to be open about it and still I "run and hide". I reached out to Victim Support because I recognised I really needed help. Victim Support have kept in touch with me, and my Support Worker understands this about me, if nothing else. My partner supports me and knows when I am not doing well. Many things have happened, and I feel like everything is too much.

I wonder what effect my mother's death has had on me, how it has affected my growth and development, and how it has affected the life I don't have. I know my family tried to shelter me from this, and even though our views of what took place differ; I am still deeply affected by the loss.

I have more insight into myself and with the help of my counsellor I can begin to understand my grief, live through the pain and build another life for myself.

Victim Support continue to stay in touch and I know they are there for me." ■

# Trauma-informed care with children & adolescents

by Paula Partington

Tips for family/whānau who are supporting children and young people following a traumatic event.



## What is Trauma?

***“Traumatic events such as family and social violence.....confront people with such horror and threat that it may temporarily or permanently alter their capacity to cope, their perception of biological threat, and their self-concepts.” Van der Kolk, 2003***

Trauma is a holistic psychobiological experience, characterised by a lack of safety. Homicide can be seen as interpersonal trauma, where a child's sense of safety and protection is threatened. Trauma symptoms in children and young people can include:

- Relational difficulties: attachment disturbances, interpersonal difficulties at home and school
- Biological effects: fight, flight, freeze responses in the brain and body, sleep disturbance
- Difficulties with emotional and behavioural regulation: increased arousal, impulsivity, regression, numbing and dissociation, hyper-vigilance, situational avoidance
- Cognitive difficulties: difficulty thinking and learning, disturbance in self-concept, confusion, intrusive memories
- Re-enactments in play
- Potential for PTSD.

Whether children and young people become traumatised following a homicide depends on many mediating factors such as their age, developmental stage, proximity to the event, and importantly the response of the parent or caregiver.

## Impact on Parents and Caregivers

It is likely that you as parents and caregivers are also impacted by a homicide. Therefore, it is important that you look to your wellbeing and self-care so you are able to support and soothe the children and young people in your care. It might also be important to seek additional community and professional support for yourself if you are feeling overwhelmed or are experiencing symptoms of trauma yourself.

## Supporting Children & Adolescents

Trauma-informed Care Guidelines (Kezelman & Stavropoulos, 2012) offer a map to support children and young people following traumatic experiences. Below are some general ideas that might help you with that:

### 1. The importance of being in relationship

Many therapeutic models stress the importance of being in relationship with our children and young people in a trusting, reciprocal, playful, accepting, curious and empathic way. This enables children and young people to feel securely attached and promotes mental wellbeing, as well as encouraging a sense of safety.

### 2. Creating safety

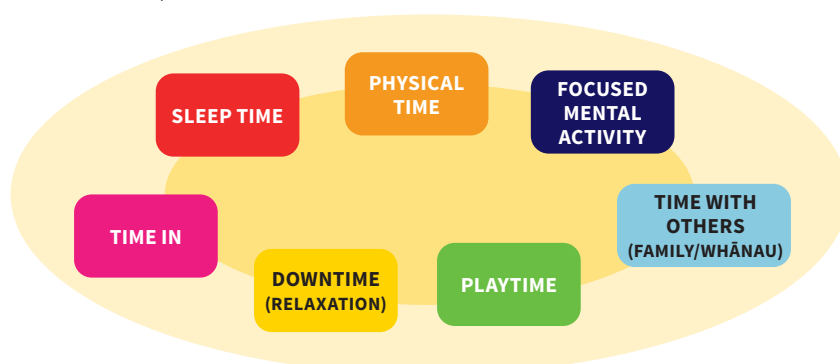
Children and young people will need to rebuild a sense of safety and protection, with predictability and routine. As parents and caregivers, you will be their secure base and safe haven (Circle of Security), which also helps create soothing in the brain circuitry responsible for the fight, flight, freeze response.

### 3. Soothing & Self-regulation

Being in a relationship with the child or young person, and providing safety, enables them to soothe their reactions and emotions effected by the traumatic event. Help them to be aware of and understand their physiological experience and provide care-giving activities that are calming, such as sensory experiences. After helping them soothe their reactions they will then be able, with your support, to understand and name their emotions which will help them regulate them. Talk with them about their experience. Validate and normalise their feelings and respond empathetically.

### 4. Help children to tell their story.

Give children and young people time to tell their story and make sense of it. They may need help with expressing themselves with age-appropriate words. Seek professional help if needed. ■



Adapted from Siegel & Rock, 2011





“ Having adults they trust and can rely on around them will make them feel less uncertain, and the world a little safer.



## References & Resources

### Anxiety:

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/anxty>

### Circle of security:

<https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/>

### Five ways to Wellbeing:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing>

Golding.K., & Hughes., D. (2012) *Creating Loving Attachments*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London

Hughes.D., & Blythe., M. (2016) *Parenting a Child who has Experienced Trauma: Trauma*. CoramBAAF Adoption & Fostering Academy, London.

Kezelman.C., & Stavropoulos., P. (2012) *The Last Frontier: Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery*. ASCA

Siegel.,D. J. (2010) *The hand model of the brain*. Mindsight. Scribe, Melbourne.

Siegel.,D. J. (2019) *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain*. Scribe, London.

Siegel.,D. J. & Rock., D. (2010) <https://drdansiegel.com/healthy-mind-platter/>

**Sparklers:** <https://www.allright.org.nz/sparklers>

**The National Child Traumatic Stress Network:** <https://www.nctsn.org/resources>



Van der Kolk., B. (2003) *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and The Nature of Trauma*. In Solomon., F. M., & Siegel., D.J. (2003) *Healing Trauma: attachment, mind body and brain*. Norton, New York.

*After a homicide: Supporting grieving children and young people* (information sheet)

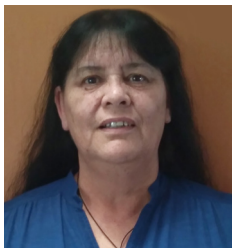
<https://victimsupport.org.nz/sites/default/files/2021-01/After%20a%20homicide%20Supporting%20grieving%20children%20and%20young%20people.pdf>

*Supporting your child or young person after a crime or traumatic event* (information sheet)

<https://victimsupport.org.nz/sites/default/files/2021-02/Supporting%20your%20child%20or%20young%20person%20after%20a%20crime%20or%20traumatic%20event.pdf>



# Meet the Team



**Diana Scott**

**Support Worker Homicide,  
Tauranga/Whakatane**

I started working for Victim Support recently to cover a team member who is on maternity leave and have thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of supporting families and victims affected by homicide. I work in both the Western Bay of Plenty (Tauranga, Te Puke, Katikati, Waihi, Mt Maunganui) and in the Eastern Bay of Plenty (Whakatane, Kawerau, Opotiki, Matata, The Coast and the Valleys of Tuhoe). I am based in the Tauranga and Whakatane Police Stations, although in Whakatane we are spoilt with our own space provided by the Police.

Prior to starting with Victim Support I managed several community NGO's, and have spent over 30 years working alongside families and other agencies within Social Services and Mental Health. The focus of my previous positions have been mental health, disabilities, housing, whānau/families, and young people.

**“ I enjoy working with people, networking, and connecting local services and workers with each other.**

My working practice is being based on Te Whare Tapa Whā with a touch of Whānau Ora. I intrinsically put whānau/family/people at the centre of all that I do. Working in a holistic manner with clients/whānau/victims is the secret to helping them move in a direction they wish to go.

I have two adult children, with my son just providing my first mokopuna in May, although I do have quite a few whānau moko who keep me busy. I hope to meet you all soon.

Ngā mihi, Diana. ■



**Michelle Mumby**

**Support Worker Homicide,  
Rotorua**

I am a recent addition to the Homicide Team and am enjoying covering the position while Sophie is on maternity leave.

Prior to starting with Victim Support I worked for many years in hospitals, both here and in Australia. I have worked in almost every department, most memorable being the Infectious Diseases Unit at Gold Coast Hospital in the 1980's. I managed the Emergency Department reception and switchboards across two hospital sites in Sydney, and also managed the Northern Beaches Cancer Service at the now deconstructed Manly Hospital in Sydney.

Since returning to New Zealand seven years ago I worked at Rotorua Hospital before taking on a position in Primary Health, primarily with diabetic patients and their retinal screening.

Working for Victim Support is another step in my long-standing career helping people. I am enjoying the new working environment and all it entails.

**“ I feel privileged to be able to help and support victims navigate through a world they did not know existed until crime or trauma happened to them.**

On a personal note, I live in Rotorua with my husband and our parcel of cats and dogs. My daughter and two amazing granddaughters live over the ditch in Sydney. My peace is found reading a book on my porch, bush walking with the dogs or within neolithic stone circles on remote islands off the top of Scotland. ■

## CONTACT

**Victim Support**

Get Help: 0800 VICTIM (0800 842 846)  
enquiries@victimsupport.org.nz  
victimsupport.org.nz  
facebook.com/victimsupportnz

