

How to talk to your kids about the deadly STEM School Highlands Ranch shooting

A psychologist recommends that you tell your kids the truth when discussing the school shooting in a quiet suburb of Denver.

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DENVER — Multiple 9NEWS viewers have asked a difficult question following the heartbreaking school shooting at STEM School Highlands Ranch: how do they tell their kids that the unthinkable has happened again so close to home?

“Regardless of your children’s age, you have to separate your opinions from the facts that we know,” said 9NEWS Psychological Dr. Max Wachtel. “There are things that we know, and there are things that we don’t.”

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Wachtel also recommends opening the conversation up to your kids and determining if they have questions.

“Every kid is going to deal with this in a different way,” Wachtel said. “It may take some kids a little longer to open up about this than others.”

Another piece of advice was to know you can’t hide information from your children in this social media age.

“First of all, you should assume your kids are going to hear everything, whether you want them to or not,” Wachtel said. “You can start the conversation, and go slowly from that.”

Below, you’ll find a list of mental health resources. During a tragedy, everyone needs a helping hand.

[Colorado Crisis Services](#)

There are four ways to get confidential and immediate help: by phone at **1-844-493-8255**, over text message (text the word “**TALK**” to **38255**), via [an online chat service](#), or at walk-in centers throughout metro Denver, northern, the southeast region and the western slope. Many of these services are available 24/7.

Trained counselors are available to help with relationship problems, depression, bullying, stress, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, family crisis and more.

[Safe2Tell](#)

Safe2Tell allows students, parents and community members to anonymously report anything that is concerning or threatening. According to their website, those who use the service can help stop a friend from committing suicide, get a friend to stop using drugs, or keep a bully from continuing to make other students miserable.

Tips can be made by calling **1-877-542-7233**. They can also be [submitted online](#), or via the [Safe2Tell app](#).

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential support for those in crisis 24/7 at **1-800-273-8255**.

[Pediatric Mental Health Institute at Children's Hospital Colorado](#)

The department offers outpatient counseling for individuals and families; intensive counseling and medication evaluation through a partial hospitalization program; and intensive individual, group and family day outpatient counseling programs.

Learn more and schedule an appointment by calling 720-777-6200 or by [visiting their website](#).

[University of Denver Counseling Services Clinic](#)

DU offers counseling services for adults, children, couples, families, etc. at affordable rates. The sessions are provided by graduate student counselors under direct supervision of licensed psychologists and a peer consultation group. Prices range from \$5 - \$30 per session.

[Mental Health Colorado](#)

This advocacy organization hosts a variety of online [mental health screening](#) in both English and [Spanish](#), a [mental health toolkit](#) for schools, a page dedicated to the latest [mental health research](#), as well as a variety of events throughout the year.

[Pro Bono Mental Health and Counseling Program](#)

Spark the Change's Pro Bono Mental Health Program connects volunteer therapists, counselors and other professionals with low-income Coloradans who are in need of the help. Call 1-844-380-6355 and if you qualify, you'll be matched with a counselor.

[Mental Health America](#)

Take [online mental health screens](#) to see where you're at, research different [mental health conditions](#) and treatments, get [tips for talking](#) about your mental health, find worksheets for [improving your mental](#) health or [staying healthy](#), etc