

Media alert

19 September 2024 | Please cascade to all media staff

Safe and sensitive reporting regarding the death of a 12 year old school student in Strathfield

Australian media professionals are asked to consider the impact of sustained, high-volume media coverage on other young people and the community in reporting on the recent death of 12 year old school student, Charlotte O'Brien.

This death, and the subsequent reporting, has caused high levels of distress and increased risk of suicide across multiple schools in the area. Reducing coverage at this time can help support the schools and services to manage this distress, and reduce the risk of further suicidal behaviour in the community.

It is vital that media representatives consider the impact coverage have on young people who knew Charlotte and other young people in distress who may identify with Charlotte's story. They also should be aware that people bereaved by suicide remain at a higher risk of suicide themselves in the months following the death of a loved one, and that media coverage of the situation can cause additional distress.

Recommendations for media in reporting on the death of Charlotte O'Brien:

- Avoid focusing on one issue as the cause of the death as this can have a negative impact. Suicide is complex and there are always multiple factors that contribute to someone dying by suicide.
- Avoid sensationalist reporting of this death.
- Take care when republishing quotes or resharing reports from other outlets.
- Ensure relevant help-seeking is available in all stories (online, print and broadcast), including help-seeking information relevant for young people.
- Emphasise any care and support that is being provided to those who may have been impacted.
- Avoid the use of stigmatising language relating to self-harm or suicide.
- Remain mindful of the impact on audiences as further details continue to emerge.

Please refer to the [*Mindframe guidelines: Reporting suicide and mental ill-health*](#). Further language guidance can be found in the [*Our words matter: Guidelines for language use*](#).

Mindframe support for media

For free support in reporting safely on suicide, call 02 4924 6900, visit mindframe.org.au or email mindframe@health.nsw.gov.au

Everymind would like to remind all journalists and managers supporting journalists that this tragic incident can impact on the welfare of those reporting the story. Everymind, in consultation with the DART Centre Asia Pacific, provides [self-care tips for journalists](#) as well as advice for editors and line managers.

Support services

Youth supports



General support services

Lifeline 13 11 14 | Text 0477 13 11 14 (24/7)
lifeline.org.au

13 YARN 13 92 76 | 13yarn.org.au
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service

Suicide Call Back Service
1300 659 467 | suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue
1300 224 636 | beyondblue.org.au/forums

StandBy Support After Suicide
1300 727 247

QLife
1800 184 527 | qlife.org.au
LGBTIQ+ service available 3pm - midnight

Kids Helpline

Free, confidential 24/7
online and phone
counselling service
for young people
aged 5-25

1800 551 800
kidshelpline.com.au

Other supports & resources

Headspace
1800 650 890 | headspace.org.au

Reachout reachout.com.au

Batyr youth mental health
batyr.com.au

Blue Knot Foundation National Centre
of Excellence for Complex Trauma
1300 657 380 | blueknot.org.au
9am-5pm AEST

#chatsafe
orygen.org.au/chatsafe

Head to Health Mental Health Portal
headtohealth.gov.au

An  **EVERYMIND** program

mindframe.org.au  [@MindframeMedia](https://twitter.com/MindframeMedia)

For more information including free advice for media, please contact **Mindframe:**

mindframe@health.nsw.gov.au |  [@MindframeMedia](https://twitter.com/MindframeMedia) | 02 4924 6900