

Statement from Survivors of Tragedy Outreach Program (STOP)



Joint Statement from Survivors of Tragedy Outreach Program (STOP) on recent acts of mass violence in Uvalde, TX, Buffalo, NY and so many other cities.

Who We Are

The Survivors of Tragedy Outreach Program (STOP) is a coalition offering survivor-to-survivor peer support and outreach from individuals directly impacted by and responding to terrorism, mass violence and military conflict. We are an international network of survivors and nonprofits that have come together for prevention and peer support to promote long-term recovery and resilience to triage and address the multi-layered impacts of targeted violence and preventable mass-scale tragedies.

A Decades-Long Problem

This is not the first time we have seen our communities, our families, devastated by mass violence and tragic loss of life, young and old. As survivors, we have experienced this first hand, the pain, the grief, the injury, the long-term ripple effects, the layers of emotion of losing a loved one and of surviving a trauma many could never imagine, and which could have been prevented. So many of us directly impacted by these tragedies, and others who feel our pain, have made tremendous efforts to move the needle and enact change. Listen to the voices of those pleading and advocating for change. We have now witnessed decades of inaction on the policy level. We have observed decades of continual acts of targeted violence and inhumanity.

Call to Action

We are calling for prevention to ensure that more families don't have to endure the pain of this kind of trauma and loss. We are calling to our society to commit to long-term healing for families of those impacted. If you are feeling helpless now, hopeless that things will never change, we want to tell you there are so many ways you can make a difference.

STOP and think. START thinking together.

STOP the arguing. START taking responsibility.

STOP the inhumanity. START addressing mental health issues in our society and providing timely support to those in need.

STOP focusing on the fringes and pay attention to the elephant in the room. START systemic change to correct the many factors causing this problem.

STOP senseless violence killing our families and causing long-term trauma and grief. START enacting effective prevention measures on state and federal levels.

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STOP feeling scared and being silent. START asking for help. If you suspect something, even in your own family, reach out to someone you trust.

STOP feeling like we can't solve this problem. START turning up the volume - talk about this problem and keep getting louder.

And be mindful, that even if we can stop this tomorrow, our organizations will continue our work because the recovery, the need for long-term healing, the pain does not stop. But together we can stop the violence. Our survivor community is finite now, but the degrees of separation are diminishing. We are cardholders to a club we never wished to belong to. This club has an inexcusably high price. If we don't stop the violence now, you may hold the card next.

Signed by the following individuals from the Survivors of Tragedy Outreach Program (STOP):

- Anita Ahuja, Conference Coordinator, Leave No Victim Behind; Victim/Witness Program Director, Victim/Witness Assistance Division, Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui, Hawaii
- Maureen Basnicki, Canadian 9/11 widow, beloved husband Ken (who lived in Toronto) was on the 106th floor of the World Trade Center on a business trip; Founding Director, Canadian National Day of Service Foundation (CNDSF)
- Heather Dearman, Cousin of Ashley Moser (wounded) and Veronica Moser-Sullivan (killed)—from the 2012 Aurora, CO theater shooting; CEO 7/20 Memorial Foundation
- Maggie Feinstein, Director of the 10.27 Healing Partnership, providing support for individuals and their loved ones impacted by the 2018 attack at the Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha Congregation synagogue, and others who experience hate-induced trauma
- Josh Garcia, former management at Pulse Orlando, survivor of the 2016 mass shooting at Pulse nightclub; Executive Director, Stars of HOPE
- Dr. Jordan Golin, JFCS Pittsburgh, President & CEO, service provider for individuals and their loved ones impacted by the 2018 attack at the Tree of Life – Or L'Simcha Synagogue
- Dr. Heidi Horsley, Executive Director - Open to Hope Foundation, helping people find hope after loss; Adjunct Professor at Columbia University

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- Scarlett Lewis, mother of Jesse, who was killed in his first grade classroom during the 2012 tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School; Chief Movement Officer, Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement
- Sallie Lynch, Senior Program & Development Consultant, Tuesday's Children, providing a lifetime of healing for families who have been forever changed by terrorism, military conflict or mass violence
- Heather Martin, survivor of the 1999 Columbine HS mass shooting; Executive Director and Co-Founder, The Rebels Project
- Michael Morisette, father of Kristina, one of 12 victims of the 2018 shooting at the Borderline Bar and Grill in Thousand Oaks, CA; Outreach Coordinator, Give an Hour
- Kathy Murphy, Senior Program Director, Tuesday's Children, providing a lifetime of healing for families who have been forever changed by terrorism, military conflict or mass violence
- Amy O'Neill, MS, LPC - Licensed Professional Counselor; Survivor of the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings; Host of "The Trauma Impact" podcast; and Consultant
- Robert Pycior, 9/11 Family Member, lost his father, a military service member, in the attack on the Pentagon; School Social Worker
- Joe Samaha, father of Reema, a victim of the 2007 Virginia Tech mass shooting; President of the VTV Family Outreach Foundation / VTV Care
- Jansen Young, survivor of the 2012 Aurora, CO theater shooting, girlfriend of victim Jonathan Blunk; COO of 7/20 Memorial Foundation



LEAVE NO VICTIM BEHIND

Canadian National Day of Service
Foundation - CNDSF

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Resources

If you or someone you know is looking for support, our organizations and our coalition of partners are here to help. Here are some resources we recommend.

- Tuesday's Children has family-focused tip sheets on coping with tragedy, trauma and grief: <http://ow.ly/wvRf50IjiHv>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network resources for coping with mass violence: www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/terrorism-and-violence/mass-violence
- Disaster Distress Helpline: Call or text 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish) to contact a counselor trained in dealing with crisis situations. Confidential, multilingual, free services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- The Rebels Project: tip sheet for knowing when and how to seek professional support after a mass shooting: www.tuesdayschildren.org/wp-content/uploads/TRP-TherapistGraphic_V2.pdf
- Transcend app for survivors from the National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center:
 - Apple: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/transcend-nmvc/id1504741131>
 - Google Play: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.musc.dhs.transcend>

Websites:

[Tuesday's Children \(https://www.tuesdayschildren.org/\)](https://www.tuesdayschildren.org/)

[Give an Hour \(https://giveanhour.org/\)](https://giveanhour.org/)

[7/20 Foundation \(https://www.7-20memorial.org/\)](https://www.7-20memorial.org/)

[The Rebels Project \(https://www.therebelsproject.org/\)](https://www.therebelsproject.org/)

[Open to Hope \(https://www.opentohope.com/\)](https://www.opentohope.com/)

[Stars of Hope \(https://starsofhopeusa.org/\)](https://starsofhopeusa.org/)

[Leave No Victim Behind \(https://leavenovictimbehind.org/\)](https://leavenovictimbehind.org/)

[Choose Love \(https://chooselovemovement.org/\)](https://chooselovemovement.org/)

[VTV Care \(https://www.vtvcare.org/\)](https://www.vtvcare.org/)

[10.27 Healing Partnership \(https://1027healingpartnership.org/\)](https://1027healingpartnership.org/)

[The Trauma Impact podcast \(https://amyconeill.com/the-trauma-impact-podcast/\)](https://amyconeill.com/the-trauma-impact-podcast/)

[Canadian National Day of Service Foundation \(https://www.serviceday.ca/\)](https://www.serviceday.ca/)

[JFCS Pittsburgh \(https://www.jfcspgh.org/\)](https://www.jfcspgh.org/)

Communities represented in STOP:

Virginia Tech, VA Boston, MA Thousand Oaks, CA Newtown, CT
Aurora, CO Littleton, CO (Columbine HS) Orlando, FL. New York, NY
Military Gold Star families 9/11 families (U.S. and Canada) Pittsburgh, PA Las Vegas, NV
Hawaii