



# When Our Safety is at Risk, Our Health is at Risk: Reflecting on the Boulder Shooting

Over the past 25 years, Coloradans experienced some of the deadliest mass shootings in our nation – at Columbine High School (1999), a Century 16 movie theater in Aurora (2012), and a Walmart in Thornton (2017), to name a few. Far too many Coloradans have endured this grim reality.

On the heels of the shootings in Atlanta, Georgia, which [left eight people dead, six of whom were of Asian descent](#), Monday's [mass shooting at a King Soopers in Boulder, Colorado](#) is only the latest in an increasing prevalence of gun violence in the U.S.

**The lives of 10 families changed in an instant Monday. Parents lost children. Children lost parents. People lost friends, coworkers and caretakers, too. The senseless loss is felt most sharply – piercingly – by the families of the 10 souls who were killed. We honor their lives by speaking their names:**

- Tralona Bartowiak, 49
- Suzanne Fountain, 59
- Teri Leiker, 51
- Kevin Mahoney, 61
- Lynn Murray, 62
- Rikki Olds, 25
- Neven Stanistic, 23
- Denny Strong, 20
- Eric Tally, 51
- Jody Waters, 65

Our hearts go out to the families of the deceased, to the survivors who bore witness to the tragedy, the first responders, the Boulder Police Department, journalists, prosecutors and the Boulder community.

The ripple effect of this grief and fear reverberates through entire communities across Colorado and the nation – yet again – and the [mental health impacts](#) on individuals, families and communities are real.

**People are in the thick of co-existing traumas as a result of the public health crisis, economic fallout and rise of intensified racial injustice over the past year. The resurgence of mass shootings adds another layer to the pile of already compounded trauma. We cannot ignore the cost to mental health.**

Prior to the shootings in Atlanta last week, there had not been a mass shooting [since March 2020. In the past seven days, there have been seven.](#) As precautions related to the COVID-19 pandemic begin to loosen, this is part of the “[return to normal](#)” we must reject.

**When our safety is at risk, our health is at risk, too. Violence erodes well-being.**

We cannot ignore how we feel, or how those around us feel. How do we sit with the increase in violence and suffering we’re seeing? What can we do – individually and collectively? How do we comprehend another assault on our safety just as we begin to take steps to reemerge from the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic? How do we talk to our children and families about these realities while supporting our own mental health?

**Here are actions you can take and resources to navigate these questions:**

- **Find mental health support:**
  - [Mental Health Partners](#): The mental health provider for Boulder and Broomfield counties offers a 24/7 Walk-In Crisis Center & Addiction

Walk-In Services at 3180 Airport Road, Boulder, Colorado. Mental health services can also be accessed on their [website](#) or by calling their main line at 303-443-8500. If a community partner would like to offer clinical support to community members or their staff, please contact [Kevin Braney](#).

- [Coping During Tragedy](#), Mental Health Center of Denver
- [MentalHealth.gov](#): An education resource for the public, health and emergency workers, government and business leaders, schools and local communities.
- [Colorado Crisis Services](#): Call 1-844-493-8255 or text “TALK” to 38255 (available 24/7).
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): Call 1-800-273-8255 or [chat online](#) (available 24/7).
- **Talk with your children:**
  - [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#), National Association for School Psychologists
  - [Talking with Kids About Fear and Violence](#), Mental Health America
  - [Helping Your Child Understand a Traumatic Event](#), Littleton Public Schools
  - [Resources for Talking to Children about Violence](#), Denver Public Schools
- **Make a donation to support the victims, their families and the Boulder community:**
  - [Colorado Healing Fund](#)
  - [Boulder County Crisis Fund \(Community Foundation Boulder County\)](#)
  - [Mental Health Partners](#): To make a monetary or in-kind donation to the mental health provider for Boulder and Broomfield counties, contact [Cindy Cohagen](#).
- **Learn more about gun laws in Colorado:**

- [Everytown for Gun Safety – Colorado](#)
- **Lift up victims of mass shootings:**
  - Share victims’ names and stories to honor their lives.
  - Do not glorify the shooter by mentioning their name.

We hope each new day brings the Boulder community closer together in healing in this time of tragedy. We grieve with you.

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