

Statement from Jane Shank, CEO of the Association for Children's Mental Health

Right now the most important charge is to come together and support ALL who live in Michigan in a strength-based, non-judgmental, non-partisan manner. Each and every person, regardless of their job or age or geographic location is experiencing grief and fear and trauma. We also need to be prepared to look ahead and move forward in planning and uniting so that nothing like this ever happens again and so that we are stronger. It's going to take many voices for this to happen, but these are some needs that need to be woven into this process.

- we need parent, youth and young adult voices at all tables, in all discussions. Those voices must be supported and must carry equal importance as those of other participants

- we need to destigmatize mental health and open up conversations that are transparent and held in safe spaces. There is no room for shame, blame or guilt

- we need peer support. Peers can connect in a way no one else can by their shared lived experience-providing hope and empowering voices to speak and be heard.

- we need to carefully look at balancing punitive and supportive measures, sharing information about resources, support, and services as well as messages about 'punishment to the full extent'.

- we also need to avoid 'resource overload' and learn to ask what people need and listen when they answer.

- we need to do with people, not to them or for them.

- we need to support ALL providers, teachers, law enforcement personnel, parents, youth, children-everyone in the state... we all hurt. Listen to each other, try to view through the eyes of others. A good place to start is by reading Sue Klebold's book, 'A Mother's Reckoning'. Sue is Dylan's mother....