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## Identifying and treating panic disorder

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### Panellists:

- Professor Andrew Chanen - Psychiatrist
- Mick Elliot - First Responder
- Dr Cait McMahon - Psychologist
- Dr Lyn O'Grady - Community Psychologist
- Dr Wei-May Su - General Practitioner

**Facilitator:** Professor Mark Creamer - Clinical and Consulting Psychologist

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### Professor Mark Creamer

Hello, and welcome to this special event hypothetical brought to you by the Mental Health Professionals Network, MHPN, and it's wonderful to see so many of you logged on for this live activity.

Before we get into it, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands across Australia, upon which our panel and our participants, all of you, are located. And I'd like to pay our respects to their elders, past, present and future. My name's Mark, Mark Kramer, and tonight I am joined by an outstanding panel of experts, who are going to help me explore some of the challenges and the issues that are raised as we work our way through this hypothetical scenario.

I'm not going to be able to introduce each of them in depth, and so I do strongly encourage you to go to the MHPN website, go to the landing page for this episode, and have a look at their bios, because they really are a stellar group of people. Over the next hour, I'm going to progressively lay out a scenario bit by bit, and I'm going to ask our panelists to comment as appropriate.

But like you, and indeed like in real life, they have no idea what's coming, so they're going to have to think on their feet, I'm going to have to think on my feet. We're all keeping our fingers firmly crossed that the wheels don't fall off. And don't forget that if you want to look at things in full screen mode, you can do so. It gives a slightly better visual experience.

But now, let me take you to the fictional Australian state of Windsor. To the capital city of Windsor, which is called Elizabeth, was recently renamed in honour of our dearly departed head of state, and to the edge of the city of Elizabeth to a suburb called Williamsville. Clearly the people of Windsor are staunch monarchists. I don't fully understand why our current head of state missed out on the naming rights. There's no Charles Town or Charlieville or anything like that. But Williamsville is actually the place that we're most interested in. Williamsville is a new suburb really only built in the last 10 to 15 years or so. Not a great amount of infrastructure there but it does have a thriving primary school and we're going to be visiting that primary school before too long. Before we do I would just like to explore briefly how well some of our organizations and our institutions are set up to assist their staff and other people in issues around mental health, the mental health of their staff and so on. Kate, Kate McMahon, you're a psychologist specializing in journalism and trauma. You've worked with media organizations across the state of Windsor,



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across Australia, indeed around the world, working with journalists to help them manage their own mental health issues following reporting on difficult events and also helping them to report trauma more sensitively and I want to come on to that in just a minute. But let's stick with the first part for the moment. In general terms how well do you think media organizations do in terms of looking after the mental health and well-being of their staff? They presumably have to report some pretty horrible stuff from time to time.

## **Kate McMahon**

Absolutely Mark. Look the reality is that journalists do cover really gruesome stuff. We're seeing that well seen in Williamsville but also across Gaza and Israel and all the places we're seeing around the world at the moment and generally speaking news organizations are very poor at the way they support and train journalists to do this work and often they send young journalists into the field as sort of a bloodletting if you like. It's like you know if you can hack it then you can deal with the blood and the gore and all that's there then you can get the job but basically news news organisations are very poor. And it sounds like there's a bit of a cultural issue there, is there? There's a real cultural issue. There's still very much a macho culture. Yeah, news organisations are changing as younger people who are far more cognizant of mental health issues are coming into the fray.

But still there is that overarching, the old hacks, if you like, are still there. And so there is very much that tough macho culture still really in many news organisations.

So they may not even get much support from their peers, from their colleagues. No, that's very true. That there's some colleagues that would just say, tough it up. I dealt with this.

So just get over it. What are you whinging about? Typical Gen Xs, Gen Zs, whatever generation we're up to now. Just toughen up. The most watched news,

TV news in the state of Windsor is Windsor News Live at 6 on Channel 6. And Channel 6 is owned by Murdoch's News Corp. Didn't know about News Corp around the world.

How do they rank in terms of how well they look after their staff? In terms of looking after their staff generally, I think very well in terms of mental health support and understanding the issue of trauma exposure, I think quite poorly. Channel 6 really haven't wanted any external psychoeducation or training or changing their policies or processes. We know that of Channel 6. They're very, very close shop. And so if ABC are doing it or if Channel 9 are doing it, Channel 6 don't want to know about it.

So they're really, as far as I'm aware, not very supportive and not very aware in terms of processes and policies, best practice processes and policies for news organisations. No peer support as far as we're aware. Right. All right. Well, that may become significant as things unfold.

## **Mark Creamer**

But for now, thank you, Kate. Mick, if I could turn to you, you're a highly experienced police officer. You've worked for decades in the Windsor State Police and in other police forces around Australia, and you've done a whole lot of different roles in that work. From your experience generally, how good do you think police forces are at recognizing and managing mental health issues in their members?

## **Mick Elliot**

Mark, I think the reality of the Williamsville police like others around the nation and around the world are full of law enforcement agents driven to protect the community and provide a safe outcome at each stage. We've got systems and frameworks that exist. However, they don't always cater for the most high risk. They may cater for 70% of people who identify and can manage both mental health of policing agents,



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but also the clients they deal with. But there are always a portion of police officers that will always be subject to the old felicity that police are bulletproof and they're unbreakable. Well, that's actually a myth that I can say that hand on hand over my journey. That is something we need to change into the future, as do a number of other organizations. And so like as with Kate and the world of media, cultural changes is probably quite important. It is. And I think we are becoming so much better at identifying the pressure points for the mental health component of policing. However, it's an intense environment that people bounce, whether it's first day, last day or summer across the journey, they are going to be impacted. It's having an awareness when, how and what to connect with to make sure that you, your future, future proof, your own mental health, the mental health of your colleagues, the mental health of the society. I didn't use to connect. I did pick up just perhaps a slight glimmer of hope there.

## Mark Creamer

Do you think things are changing? Are things improving at all?

**Mick Elliot** In 34 years, yes. I think there's a long, long way to go, Mark. There is a long way to go and that's organisationally and as well as individuals, identifying and taking actions to remedy their own circumstances, but collectively with the community. We're much better at working with the community and our stakeholders and our support, critical support services, but I think there's a long way to go.

**Mark Creamer** Sure, sure. All right, thanks very much, Mick. Lyn, Lyn O'Grady, you're a very experienced clinical and educational psychologist. You're also the area school psychologist for the area in which Williamsville Primary sits. Let me ask you first of all about the students. Just as a matter of interest, are we doing anything with our students, our primary school kids, to teach them resilience skills or coping skills? Is that on the agenda at all?

**Lyn O'Grady** Yeah, absolutely, Mark. There's a lot of work that's happened in the last 10, 20 years probably to really bring mental health, resilience, well-being, whatever the words we've used to describe it into school. So it's in curriculum in various ways, but there's programs. Ideally, it's done as a whole school approach. So you sort of doing it across the whole school rather than individual kind of teachers doing the work and teachers being supported in doing that work.

And we understand schools as communities. So really looking at relationships and looking at the mental health quite broadly. So skills and coping is part of that. But we also know that sense of belonging,

the care for each other, all of those kinds of aspects of the school community are also really important to everyone. I know this is an impossible question, but do you think it works? Does it help? Are we producing more resilient children as a result?

Yeah, well, I don't think the research would support that and particularly after COVID. I think there's a lot of questions around that and we've got a whole lot of kind of concerns around school attendance and resilience in children.

I think schools often are places where a lot of community issues are brought and schools are kind of expected to do it. A whole lot of work around that as well.

So I think schools sometimes fill that pressure and do the best they can, but they're also under pressure themselves and teachers under a lot of pressure as well. So I think it's a work in progress. I think a bit like Mick really,

it's better than it was 20 years ago, 30 years ago, but still work began and doing it in ways that are productive and evidence-based is really important. - Sure. Well, you mentioned teachers there and look,



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it strikes me that teaching is becoming more and more difficult. It seems to me they're exposed to more and more pressure and more and more difficult parents, dare I say. What about the mental health of teachers?

Do they get training, do you think, or adequate support in looking after their own mental health? - Yeah, I think more work could be done as well. So I think that often they come into schools not necessarily feeling prepared to deal with the sort of work that they are needing to do in terms of children's social-emotional issues or family issues.

I think sometimes working with parents is the hardest part of school staff's job and building those relationships and respectful ways of communicating and having codes of conduct and all of those kinds of things are work in progress as well.

And people feeling that they can have a voice but do that in a way that's respectful of each other is a really important part of that work between teachers and parents. All in the interest of the children, having that at the centre, but sometimes it's difficult to keep that in mind as well. - Yeah, absolutely.

## Mark Creamer

Thank you very much, Lyn. I would like to now introduce us all to the family who are going to become fairly central in our story. It's the Robinson family. Jim and Jodie Robinson are in their early 30s and they have some seven-year-old twins, Shane and Matilda. Jim is a factory manager. He started off on the factory floor and he gradually worked his way up. He's a pretty, he can be a sort of personable kind of guy and he's obviously got some skills. Jodie works as a hairdresser. She used to work full-time before the kids were born, but she now works a couple of days a week as a hairdresser. Both Jim and Jodie don't own the children and I have to say that they compete for the children's affections often in a way that some of us might consider to be a touch pathological. In fact, the whole dynamic of this family is, if you'll forgive me for using the term airing on the pathological, the relationship between Jim and Jodie is very volatile. It veers wildly from declarations of undying love for each other to screaming matches of abuse and verbal aggression. We think not physical aggression, but nevertheless verbal aggression. Jim has a reputation in some quarters as being a good bloke. He's obviously got some interpersonal skills, but in other quarters as being aggressive and short-tempered and volatile, particularly when he's had a few drinks. He can be quite difficult and he pushes the boundaries a lot in all sorts of areas, both legal and otherwise. Jodie also has a long history of psychological problems, problems in relationship, history of relationship problems, history of perhaps some emotion regulation kind of problems as well. She has in the past had a diagnosis, whole borderline personality disorder.

Andrew, Andrew Chanan, you're a psychiatrist, a very, very experienced psychiatrist. You have a particular interest in personality pathology. You also are fortunate enough to be Jodi's psychiatrist.

Now, let's just put Jodi to one side just for a second. What about this diagnosis of borderline personality disorder? Do you think it's a useful diagnosis?

## Andrew Chanen

Yeah, it's a good question, Mark. I think that if you take away the word borderline, yes it is. Personality disorder is a very helpful concept for understanding when somebody's personality development means that they can't form a stable sense of who they are and how other people relate to them and they have difficulty developing their capacity for intimacy, cooperative relationships, conflict resolution and really what it describes is a form of developmental problem. The borderline bit, not so helpful.



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It's a historical term. It's laden with a lot of meaning and really these days, it's just shorthand for the most severe form of personality disorder. There are other forms of personality disorder, of course, is that there's presumably some benefit to be had in differentiating them, quite different to, I don't know, avoidance, for example? Actually, no. In fact, one of the things that we've discovered over the last 30 years is that there's really only one personality disorder. It's one thing and you can describe the flavour of it.

It's a bit like you've got ice cream and then you're describing the different flavours. It's all ice cream though and I think that's been an important discovery because actually trying to partition these things into different labels has probably done everybody a disservice and really what we're talking about is what it is to be a person and Jodi really struggles to understand herself and other people. She has difficulty understanding Jim and how, you know, why he does what he does. And her own life has been really marked by difficulties, particularly since she was about 12 or 13. She was always a kind of an irritable person when she was younger. But since puberty, she really had difficulty understanding people, understanding their motives. Her friendships were up and down. And they really followed the same pattern that her marriage, you know, has followed. Lots of ups and downs, lots of difficulty managing. But nonetheless, she's been able to have an enduring relationship with Jim. And they have many times when they have very happy times. But the bad times are really bad. I don't want to labor the point too much. But I'm interested also in potential gender differences.

## **Mark Creamer**

Now, you're kind of at the cutting edge, and so you know all this stuff. But out there in the real world, as it were, do you think there is a tendency to perhaps use a label, a borderline for females, where perhaps males might get diagnosed with something like antisocial personality disorder?

## **Andrew Chanen**

I'm thinking maybe Jim might even get labeled that at times. Look, there is an element of that. But actually, what we know in the community is if you go out and do surveys, actually, there really aren't gender differences in personality disorder, particularly the severe forms. But there are absolutely different patterns of help seeking. So Jody's come to see me. In fact, I know that Jim has never sought help for his problems. And there are absolutely cultural, historical, social reasons why these things present differently. And absolutely in the professions, these terms can be weaponized, particularly by, unfortunately, my peers who weaponize these terms and often use them pejoratively. Down the road, there's actually a large field with tumbleweeds through it. And it's got future sight of the Williamsville Hospital and Williamsville is a very hospital. And there really are no services around here for, you know, people with severe mental health problems. So, you know, poor old Jim really wouldn't even stand a chance of finding help anyway. And so, you know, he gets a bit drunk on Saturday night and, you know, sometimes gets in trouble. Exactly. Even if he did put his hand up, which is pretty unlikely, it would be very difficult for him to get help.

## **Mark Creamer**

Absolutely. Thank you very much, Andrew. Let me bring you in, May, if I could. May Su, you're a very experienced GP with a particular interest in domestic conflict and things like that. You've got the pleasure of being the Robinson family GP. So, you know Jody very well. You know the twins very well, Shane and Matilda. You know Jim, but as we were just talking about, you don't see him very often. He's a bloke. He doesn't like going to the GP and avoid it as much as he can. But you do know him and you are his GP. Can I just ask briefly, I mean, you heard what Andrew was saying there about the way we might conceptualise personality kind of stuff. Do you agree with what Andrew was saying? Would you go along with that?

## **May Su**



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Yeah, I very much agree with that. As some may already know, there's been some changes in our classification from a categorical form of describing personality to more of a dimensional consideration that personality in any form of disorder can sometimes look very different to each person who might assess that and each individual even in our historical definitions of borderline personality disorder that could look very different. And it wasn't very reproducible our ability to effectively be able to determine what categorical form that somebody had a personality disorder.

So that it wasn't very helpful for us to be able to really move forward using those as definitions. And as Andrew said, I think it is tricky when we talk about stigma because I think if we don't look at the underlying reasons for why people develop those names in the first place, I think you can just move a stigmatized name from one name to another name. And I think the new recognition we do have is that personality disorder often really is derived from developmental issues. And I often see them in the context of abuse and trauma. And I think that would probably be valid, not just for Jodi, in terms of what might be occurring, but also for Jim as well. And it's interesting because I think what we do recognize is that the demonstration of how then a person might present into their presentation of how their personality might present itself may both have similar origins, but maybe expressed very differently and maybe expressed at different times in different periods of their life as well. Okay, we are reluctant to put specific labels on them, but we can probably agree that there are personality issues for both Jodi and Jim. And I'm interested in your thought about, I guess, about the welfare of the children and how it might be for the children in this family.

## Mark Creamer

And I'm going to just lead you on as well to a related question, which is, how do you balance the benefits of keeping the family together for the benefit of the children versus leaving children in a situation where there's so much conflict and high emotion and so on. Is that a balance that you grapple with?

## May Su

Yeah, yeah, it's a good question. I might just make one further point, though, that sometimes a person with personality disorder, they don't have a personality disorder throughout the whole of their lifetime. So it's not always longitudinal. So you may find that there's different elements of functionality at different transition points within their life. And this is really interesting because they have seven-year-old twins.

And so the perinatal period, the period where they have very young children is a really common period of time where you often see someone who may have been previously functioning suddenly become dysfunctional. So we don't actually have a background for Jody or Jim about what their functioning was like before this happened and what their relationship was like before this actually happened. Okay, okay, fair enough. Yeah, then I was going to answer your question, which was about the benefit of them actually staying together as a family unit. And I guess this is always a real concern whenever there's actually children involved because I think many of us get very triggered when there are children who are involved in the situation. It is one of those concerns in terms of if you do see children involved about your question about one, whether you might consider mandatory reporting, which I think we do increasingly recognise that even if children aren't physically hit, that actually just being in a household where there may be highly expressed emotion, which I think is what's being described here, can also have a significant impact. So it'd be what we call an adverse childhood experience. Having said that, it's cumulative. So we know that the number of cumulative adverse childhood experiences is what is likely to contribute to the long-term outcomes for the child, as well as the corollary that we were hearing in talk about the benefits about what you could do to add resilience. So there is a converse term called positive childhood experiences that there are factors that you can put into the child and the family's life.





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So this is where you are talking about family supports and services which may actually be protective and may allow the family unit to still stay together even in a really difficult situation.

## Mark Creamer

Okay thank you very much May because this is a really difficult situation. Let me take you back to the Robinson family now because all is not well. Unfortunately last night around midnight the neighbours heard the most horrendous row going on in the Robinson household. Jody and Jim were screaming at each other. The neighbours heard the sound of plates or something smashing against the wall. Jody was screaming out that Jim had had an affair and so on. The neighbours are very worried about the children or about the safety of the children and so they decide to call the police. They call the police and then they go around to the Robinsons they bang on the door and they tell Jody and Jim that they've called the police. Mick you've spent many years in the police no doubt you've been to the odd domestic or two. What's it like for a police officer to be called to I guess break up a fight between husband and wife?

## Mick Elliot

It's really interesting it's the humanity we someone touched on before. Every situation police respond to will have an element of humanity that will link to them or their partner or someone in there in the responding call. So it's it's heading into the great unknown it's heading into a volatile situation that could very quickly turn on the police at the same time when when the intervention or disruption strategies are discussed implemented. It's really it can take a toll just in the lead-up to to attending situations like that where there really is a great unknown. The levels of screaming and smashing can be a very short isolated incident or can lead to a catastrophic consequence.

## Mark Creamer

So it's a really it's a it's a very very difficult situation to mentally manage. Normally would you go just police or would you bring along a social worker or a family worker or?

## Mick Elliot

In the first instance generally market would be the police attending. We would whilst we're on route we'd be trying to get as much bio data and information about the situation as we can. So we tap into our systems to see what services have been involved what policing units have been involved if they have been and what we can use from the very first point of contact to leverage some sort of compliance with both parties and that's the both parties to the exclusion of the children at this stage. Sure.

## Mark Creamer

Okay well in this case when the police arrive Jodi has disappeared. Jim doesn't know where she's gone. The attending police officers see the mess they see the terrible mess in the kitchen and so on. Jim is very calm Jim as we say is very personal kind of guy he can turn it on when he needs to. He's very calm and he explains that Jodi lost it completely she just went berserk she started throwing things around at him he says that he was very worried he was very worried about the children and so on but now everything looks very calm Jodi's out she's gone.

The police assess the situation and they think that okay well it's safe enough to leave the children with Jim and we'll reassess it in the morning so they leave him there. Andrew about two o'clock in the morning you get a well Jodi leaves a message for you on your voicemail she's clearly very agitated she's very distressed he says that Jim's thrown her out she's frightened of what he might do.

You of course have excellent boundaries and so you don't keep your phone in your bedroom and it's not until the next morning when you get up a bit before seven o'clock that you look at your phone and you see the voicemail from Jodi.



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Are you gonna do anything at that point?

## Andrew Chanan

Yeah it's interesting that you know traditional traditional view of how to manage these things is actually to be a bit at arm's length. But actually one of the things that works is to be there when things are difficult. And so actually I did have my phone on overnight and I do tell Jodie that she can call me at any stage if she needs to. And she rang me actually very distressed because, you know, Jim had told her to get out. She felt very rejected by him.

She said that, you know, everybody sees me when I'm at my worst. No one ever sees me when I'm at my best. They don't take any notice. And actually I said, look, I'll call you, you know, again in the morning and check in how you're going. Can you go somewhere safe tonight? And she said, I can. I said, are you gonna be safe overnight? She said, absolutely. I'll call you again if things get worse. She said, I just need time away to help me to settle my emotions and then to regroup.

And so she did call me.

## Mark Creamer

Okay, in the morning though, you do as you promised and you ring her back, but she's not answering her mobile. It goes straight through to voicemail. She still has not returned home.

Jim has tried to ring around, try and find it. Can't find her anywhere. He drops the children off at a before school program. And then he goes to the police station. And whether it's to protect the children or whether it's to just have a go at Jody, it's difficult to tell. But he asks the police to issue a protection order. Now, these things are called different things in different states, but in the state of Windsor, they have something called a temporary protection order that the police can grant, as it were, and it has to be reviewed by a court within 72 hours. Jim is so calm and he's so logical and so on he presents so well the police saw the mess in the house last night They believe what he says everything about Jody so they do issue this temporary protection order that says She must stay away from the children from the family home until it's reviewed by a court May the police contact you first of all to ask you whether you've seen Jody and you haven't you haven't heard from her. But also to tell you about the protection order. What's your reaction to that?

## Andrew Chanan

Um, look, I have been in a similar situation before and this is a really difficult situation because on one token I have been contacted by the police and I need to release information, sorry that been requested to release information But by the same token, I don't have enough information at that point of time to know what information I'm actually allowed to release And so unless there's a really obvious thing where I'm actually concerned about her actual risk of life I'm not actually at liberty to necessarily actually say whether she's actually attended in the practice or not Even if it's actually saying so it is a really tricky situation and I guess the other concern that I have is I'm probably the only GP and I'm in Williamsville you are yeah, I might actually be the GP not for just for Jody, but I said for the children and I know so So you've got split loyalties, of course, yeah, but anyway, you don't know where she is There's not really much you can do but at least you know now that the protection order is in place Jody still not answering her phone so Jim rings her leaves a message Some might say a rather gloating message to say that he's put the protection order in place and she has to stay away.

Andrew, how do you think she's going to react when she hears that message? Well, I'll let you into a secret. She actually rang me and she hasn't spoken to anybody else.





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And she's beside herself. She says they're going to take the kids off me. You know, Jim does this all the time. He punishes me. And look, the only option I have is to kill myself. And I spent quite a bit of time helping her to manage that situation. She can't see any way. I understand. How good are we generally at predicting behavior? Could be suicidal, but it could be other violent behaviors. Are we any good at it? Are we good at predicting behavior? No, we're really lousy actually on a group level. And we're pretty lousy with individuals when we kind of try to predict behavior from somewhere in an office. However, what we're better at is understanding people, individuals and their stories and knowing how they might respond. And one of the things about Jodie is she's been doing this for her whole life. And it's a bit like she's been dealt a hand of cards that doesn't really contain any very useful cards for living life. And she plays those cards because they're the ones in her hand. And you can predict that when these things happen, she will become highly distressed, won't be able to think and ultimately draw the conclusion that she can see no way out of this and that she thinks that killing herself is going to be the only way to manage how overwhelmed she feels and how ashamed she feels that she can't look after as she puts it look after her family.

Well okay not a bad prediction but it's not quite right so after school starts Jody turns up at the school she goes straight into Shane and Matilda's classroom she shuts and locks the door behind her we don't know what's happening in that classroom but what we do know is that a few minutes later a child not not one of the twins but another child from the class comes out and runs to the principal's office she's got a handwritten note that she gives to the principal that says I don't want anyone to get hurt but I'm not leaving unless I can leave with my children. The principal asks the child several questions he doesn't really get much further it seems that everything's in inverted commas calm in there Jody has told all the children to sit quietly and the teacher to sit and so on.

The principal asks if that's a child if he thinks that Jody is holding anything the child says yes but he couldn't see she couldn't see what it was she's got something black in her hand the principal is not coping very well he's getting extremely agitated he's really worried he says could it be a gun the child says well it might be the principal starts to push her and says well was it a gun was it a gun the child says well uh yeah I think it I think it might be a gun. Lyn you're in the school today the principal has called you in he explains the situation and he asks your advice what do you suggest he does?

Wow this is a pretty unusual situation for a principal and I can appreciate how distressing it would be and having to make decisions around what to do I think the police needs to be called I think that's outside of the scope of the principal to handle this really,

and particularly if he has formed that opinion that there's a gun. So I think it is a phone call to the police. Our emergency management process in the school as well, calling together.

So people need a team. Good advice. He does call the police. He calls the police and he tells them what's happened and he tells them that the child has come out and says that she's got a gun.

He's also very overwhelmed. How much do you think it's important to look after him to deal with his kind of... Yeah, I think that's very important.

And I think the idea of calling together, let's get some leadership, the other leadership people in here. It's a pretty small school, but we do have emergency management processes. So I think calling in trusted colleagues who form that team and to say,

well, this is an emergency situation. Let's get the team together. Let's call the police and effectively put things in place, I think, and get some things in place and then keep sort of working through a process.

I think it's important. But certainly helping him is important. Yeah, support him in helping him to kind of make some sense. Yeah. Well, a parent was standing in the corridor outside the principal's office while all this went down.



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The parent has heard what the child said to the principal. The parent has heard the principal making the phone call to the police. The parents at Williamsville Primary have a Facebook group that they talk to each other on.

They also actually have a WhatsApp group and they have an Instagram group and they have a group on that thing that used to be known as Twitter. So in a matter of minutes,

this story has gone viral. It is right all over the place with all the inaccuracies and exaggerations that you might expect for a story like this. Mick,

the principal has called you. He's told you that this is going off. The Windsor Police, he called the Windsor Police Force. They've put it through to your unit, the Special Response Unit,

also known as the Windsor Task Force or the WTF. That was a bad joke, really. I shouldn't have bothered with that one. We'll call it the Windsor Special Response Unit.

The bottom line is, Mick, it's come through to you. This incident is now your responsibility. The principal has told you that the child has said that Jodie has a gun.

Are you going to take that seriously? We'll certainly take it seriously, Mark, but we need to strip everything back. And we'll look at the facts, what we have as intelligence sources and how we can validate what the student has said and what our response is going to be,

bearing in mind we now have a very live situation that we need to control the flow of information so that we don't have hysteria breaking beyond an environment that we can control, which appears as though it has.

So we need to get on top of this on a number of different levels. We need to respond to that school and provide the principal, the staff, and the students a protective environment and bearing in mind,

let's validate what we've got. So what do we know versus what has been reported to the principal and what we can use as a platform to disrupt the activities in that classroom to the exclusion of physical and emotional trauma.

At this point, would you be calling up the armed response unit? Certainly be notified. We would know of potential armed situation at a school that's gathering significant interest within the community.

The frontline responders would be there, would be responding to get as much detail to isolate the incident and then we'll work through what we've got and what we need to do from the professional side of things with the experts experts in that type of arrangement.

You talk about isolating things, would you try and prevent people coming on to the school grounds? Absolutely, we would try and isolate that area where mum's got the classroom locked down with the children,

we need to work out her mental state and what her intentions are, what her triggers may be. So we've put over it and covert capabilities that we have to think about here Mark to make sure that firstly,

is Jim going to be aware of this and if he's on them platforms that we spoke about he probably is and he's going to have a hell of a lot of emotion coming into this without any effect and basis behind it. So we've got a real boiling pot here to deal with.

You have indeed Mick. We'll hear about Jim in just a second because but you know we're right that of course it's gone viral so of course there's a whole host of parents and interested onlookers gathering outside the gates.



# Transcript

They've put a couple of burly rugby playing teachers on the gates to stop people coming in. They're very well-known rugby players from the state women's rugby team and they're doing a fantastic job at stopping people coming in.

Kate, this is something presumably that the media will be on to in a flash. What are they likely to do?

Are they going to send crews out there? Absolutely, look if it's on Instagram or whatever in all of those sorts of platforms the journals will be across it. There'll be people that will be tracking what's going on.

Journals will be sent out probably for something like this but it'll be whoever is available but I do know that newsroom is a fairly new newsroom in that that town and they're fairly young journals that are going out there so they'll be deployed very quickly.

They're young journals but they've also sent the television crews. They sent the band, the thingy jigs on top and so on. So indeed,

in fact, you're right. But within a matter of minutes, there's a huge contingent of media outside the gate. Television crews, radio, print media and so on. We've been focusing a lot on the mental health.

I was talking to you before about the mental health of the journalists. But let's think about this other side about how they might be able to report this incident in a sensitive kind of a way.

Lachlan Murdoch, as you know, is the new CEO of News Corp. He's decided to stamp his mark on the organization and he's told his editors to be as sensationalist as possible.

In fact, he has told them he wants them to outfox Fox News. With that kind of editorial guidance, how easy is it going to be for the journalists to take account of people's well-being?

Really hard, Mark. This is a problem of the young journalists in this newsroom are finding it. There's a couple of journalists I know.

One of the young journalists got there because I'm a friend of her mum. And she really is a young person that really wants to tell the world about really important things and try and change the world in a very positive way.

And she's been really struggling with what she talks about the challenges, the moral challenges in the newsroom where she wants to tell the truth and she feels that Murdoch,

unfortunately, is trying to put spin. And that becomes quite a distressing place for her, but she's young and she needs to stay there. Look, they will be probably focusing on the crazy mother sort of story.

I know this news organization tends to put that sort of spin. They'll be really highlighting any potential violence. And unfortunately,

until whatever pans out, it will be very much that reactive type of journalism. - Yes, okay, and a rapidly evolving situation.

It's going to be very difficult for them. Mick was right that Jim, of course, has heard about this on social media. So he's arrived at the school gates. He's very agitated.

He's demanding to be let in. He's making these threats about what he'll do if Jody hurts the children at all. At this stage, the gatekeepers are managing to keep him out, but he's very agitated.

Something needs to be done. Lyn, you're the only mental health professional on the site at the moment. Will you go and talk to him, try and calm him down? - I think I'd be wanting to get some guidance from the police.



# Transcript

So it's an active situation and the police are really in charge. So I think it's really talking to the police about how they are wanting us, what roles they want us to play while it's such an active live scenario.

So I'd be tempted not to do that. I think I'd be wanting to really be working behind the scenes. I think harnessing the support around the principal and getting some things in place,

knowing that there's a lot of work that will lead to happen. And while the police are in charge of the active scenario, we take guidance from them. And if they wanted that to happen, then that would be a conversation we'd have with police.

So I wouldn't want to be interfering and sort of stepping where it may make things worse. - Mick is just about to arrive on the scene. Luckily, he was in the area. So he's just about to arrive on the scene.

He's not there yet though. You're going to leave these teachers to manage Jim on their own, are you? - Well, I might be going to have a bit of a behind the scenes look, but the teachers probably know Jim.

So who would be the person that has a relationship with Jim? So that might be something to think about. Who has a good relationship with Jim? And it's probably not me. And bringing a psychologist in doesn't always, you know, sort of make sense to people.

So maybe it is as talking to the principal around, while the police are on their way, you know, is there someone that does know Jim well that Jim would trust? So that could be part of the conversation if the police aren't quite there yet,

for sure. - Well, that's a very good point. Actually, there is a teacher that Jim knows very well and trusts and so this teacher, the male teacher comes out, talks to Jim and actually does a very good job of calming him down. And rightly or wrongly,

you consult with your colleagues and so on, as I say, Mick hasn't quite arrived yet, but you decide that Jim's going to be more easy to manage inside the gates than he is outside the gates and so you say that he can come in,

provided that he sits in the principal's office, doesn't move and if he does move, then you'll get the police to arrest him. Mick, you've arrived at the scene.

So I'm just interested in just a bit of a diversion that I'm guessing that more often than not, if it's a situation, something like this,

it's more likely to be a male perpetrator than a female. And I'm wondering whether or not you would react differently in this scenario, whether it's a female or a male.

- Look, with armed offenders, the stakes are high, at the highest level, whether it's male or female. So we have to take precautions regardless of gender. So we would look at this pretty practically and say that we've got potentially armed offender in a isolated room full of children or young children.

We need to isolate both parents. We need to get police in contact with Jim and we need to establish a safe room for him to be and so that he cannot penetrate into that room and cause a situation that's going to be potentially lethal.

- Absolutely. Do you try to establish communication with Jodi? Would you try ringing her on a mobile, for example, and to talk to her? - Potentially, yes. We get a negotiator at that stage.

We've got access to negotiators within the special unit. And what we would like to do before we do that is to find out what will make Jodi respond to anything firstly the police are going to do.



# Transcript

Does she have a healthy relationship with the police? Does she have a respectful relationship with the police? The primary focus right here is to reduce Jodi's intent or her agitation or her levels of reaction that will flow into an incident we can't control in that room.

Absolutely. Yeah, okay. I'm just interested in whether, because you talked before about wanting to, I mean I'm putting words into your mouth really,

but wanting to know whether she really does have a gun. If you get through to her on the mobile, would you ask her? Yes, yes, potentially in the right way. And that's engaging with her in a manner that's not threatening, not directing that she has a gun, but asking what the situation is and getting as much information from her. But also, we may have security cameras, we may have teachers on site, there may be an adult in the room, there may be some other mechanism that we can use to see her state, her possession of any weapons. Okay, it's tricky. Well, actually, let me tell you, you do get through to it, you do ask her, there's a long cord and then she says, that's for me to know and you to find out. Not much help. Someone's phone's ringing, is it? Or is that my imagination? Anyway, that's for me to know and you to find out, so that's not much help. But while you're considering what to do, Jody's, one of Jody's good friends has approached Lyn and says that she knows Jody's psychiatrist and her GP.

## Mark Creamer

You were talking about getting some more information, Mick. Would you like to talk to May or Andrew? Get some more information? We're having a bit of trouble with your internet, unfortunately, but did you get that question?

## Mick Elliot

No, if you could go again, Mark.

## Mark Creamer

I was just saying, I was sending a message through to say that everyone that throws them in, so I'll do apologize. - I think the problem is your end, but I might be wrong. Anyway, the point was that a friend of Jodie's has spoken to Lyn and said that she knows Jodie's psychiatrist and GP and Lyn gives you their contact details. Would you want to talk to them?

## Mick Elliot

Absolutely, absolutely. We need to get as much detail about Jodie as we can and certainly to ascertain the veracity of what has been put to us, so absolutely.

## Mark Creamer

Okay, so I'll come back to you, May, because you raised this before. The first person of the two they get onto is you, May. It's very difficult to get through to talk to a GP, but it's practically impossible to get through to talk to a psychiatrist. So they get through to you a bit faster. Can I bring you back to that question? 'Cause the situation has now developed. Will you give information to the police without Jodie and Jim's permission?

## May Su

Yeah, so this is a different situation because we're really talking about a risk of life and there's a clear potential risk of life.



# Transcript

So I think that's where we are able to actually be able to say and generally when we do discuss confidentiality with patients, I think it's really helpful to let them know in advance that this will be the one situation where we may have a breach of confidentiality. So I think in that circumstance, your priority is just trying to ensure that the family is going to be safe and working out what might be going on. And certainly my thoughts, which would be going on knowing Jodie, would be that she sounds really scared. She sounds probably really scared that, you know, the kids are going to be taken away and this is her opportunity. Like this is her only chance to keep the children. It certainly sounds that what the concern would be is that this is probably an escalation in the interactions which may have been occurring between her and Jim and it's never gotten to this point before. But I'm also aware that in the past Jody's had a lot of difficulty when she's been in a really emotional state and so it may also mean that it's really hard for her to work her way out of the state at this point and that she may need a lot of support to come out of that. Like her emotions are probably really heightened, she might be dissociating which is a term where she's not even really quite aware of what's actually happening anymore. She may not have good control of how to regulate her emotions because she's so wound up and I imagine the increasing escalation of the situation with the police involvement you know there's probably a lot of noise and a lot of excitement which is happening and there are children involved is probably exacerbating all of this.

Mark Creamer

Is this kind of stuff going to be useful for Mick, this background that you're getting from her GP from May? I'm not sure if I can see Mick's response there but I had to lip read but I think he said yes. I'll probably continue on to also give some information about what Jodie has found helpful when she's been in a really stressful situation to help her calm down and to remind her about that and also to offer if that was going to be the situation there might be some safe situations or safe people or safe circumstances which may help in this circumstance. Sure this is all useful stuff Mick, would you like May to attend the scene? Would you like her to come to the site? I can get a police officer down to May to communicate with May and relay that to us and the teams that will be performing the in accordance and the immediate actions that may resolve this situation.

So she doesn't have to come to the site? No. If she believed that that was one thing that would trigger a withdrawal and maybe a resolution, we would consider getting there down. But no, we're only putting someone else in a situation that if it's an armed offender who has no control of their own emotions. I might make the comment here.

Sorry Mick. Yes, go on May. I might make the comment here that there certainly have been circumstances in the past where I've actually been involved on the phone for de-escalation.

And so that's actually been something which has been helpful where you might actually have somebody because it's very different when you've got someone who's a trusted individual which I think Andrew really alluded to that when, you know, Jodi was in a really tight spot. You know, this was a person she called to. So I'm not sure in this circumstance whether it be Andrew or whether it be me. I mean, if I'm the one who's easier to contact and she's got a good relationship with me which hopefully she does,

it might be me where even if I'm not there in person, like even just having someone on a speakerphone that she trusts that she feels comfortable with might actually be something to help bring down the situation.

I was just going to say, I'm going to talk to Andrew about that in a little while but first of all, you've got a more urgent thing because Jim gets through to you. Jim is contained in the principal office.

He's doing what he's told but he doesn't like it. He gets through to you and he says that he knows that if he could go and talk to Jodi, he could persuade her to come out. And Jim is quite calm and he sounds very calm and so on.





# Transcript

He wants you to talk to the police and tell them to let him out and go and talk to Jodi. I'm guessing you're not going to do that or would you do that? Look, my suggestion would be no because they've already had a background where the interactions have escalated each other.

That I would empathize with the difficult situation and the safety, but that my advice would be not to in this circumstance. They're not in a circumstance where they've had safe interactions together in a potentially volatile situation that wouldn't be the timing where I'd suggest that that would be a time where they'd test it out.

- Okay. All right, thanks, May. Well, look, the situation in the classroom seems to be relatively stable. So another teacher has been able to see a little bit through the window.

It appears that all the children are sitting quietly. Nobody looks hugely distressed. The most distressed person looks to be the teacher who is a young first year male teacher.

Only a few months in, he was very nervous even before he started teaching. That's indeed hard would be, but anyways, very nervous. And looks like Jodi has told him to sit on the floor against the wall opposite the door.

She has her back to the door. So we can't really see too much. It does seem that she's holding something, but we can't see exactly what it is. Mick,

you've been talking to Jodi on the mobile. She's asked if she can talk to Andrew. Would you allow her to talk to Andrew? I'm afraid we've lost you,

Mick. - Mark, I've just come back in there. I think your question then was, would you allow Jim to talk to... - No, no. So we've now moved on,

and Jodi has asked you if she can talk to Andrew. Are you going to allow her to talk straight to Andrew, or do you want things to come through you? - I'd like a police officer with Andrew,

but a critical situation here. We've got a female potentially armed, a room full of children. We need to get things done. And if Andrew is a person who can influence a resolution, we would do that.

We'd have a police officer there from the special unit that could control any immediate actions that we need to take should things go to an escalation that is potentially serious consequence to parties involved.

Okay, Jodie does get on to you Andrew, she gets on to you to talk to you, she's still distressed but she's not quite as bad as you might have expected her to be. Is there anything particular that you'd be saying to her knowing the situation that what kind of things would you be saying?

Well you know I would have hoped to have had a chat to Mick beforehand that would have been my preference you know he's an expert armed potentially armed situations and I think it would have been helpful for us to have a discussion about what I know about Jodie and how not to keep pouring petrol on the fire.

You know I think that it really needs to be a team effort and while I have actually spoken to a number of patients over the years in these situations and in fact I've spoken to Jodie in difficult situations before this is by far the worst and look she's actually managed them before so I would be actually talking to her about what's really going on for her if she rang me and you know I had the opportunity I think

I would be remiss not to actually ask her what's going on I'd have to gauge whether I was making things worse but actually Jodie's been underestimated for years because actually she's done a lot of work with me over the years she's actually done very well in treatment.



# Transcript

Situations, not as dramatic as this, but actually difficult situations for her used to happen all the time when I first met her. Multiple times a week the police were called to the home and nowadays these things are actually pretty infrequent,

or relatively infrequent, but she's actually developed some skills and done well in treatment to actually be able to learn to begin to manage situations less difficult than this.

But this will be, this is the most difficult one she's wound up in. -You have some very special skills, Andrew, because she does calm down a lot while you're talking to her and she agrees to a compromise and she says,

"I'll tell you what I'll do." "Andrew, I'll come out peacefully "if I can leave with my children "and take them to my mother's." Now, you know her mother. Her mother is a very stable,

sensible kind of person. She's a great support for her. She lives in the country about 150 kilometers outside Williamsville. On the other hand,

you think it's probably not going to be possible because of what she's done so far and there is a protection order in place. Would you bend the truth? You've got a classroom of kids there potentially held up with a gun.

Would you tell Jody that, "Yes, okay, we'll sort that," or would you stick to the truth? -So normally I would stick to the truth, but I wouldn't actually go straight to the bitter facts.

I would actually work with the information I have and Jody and I have had a lot of discussions over the years and we're quite fond of saying that, you know, when you're in a hole,

you need to stop digging. And so actually I would be talking with her about how deeper a hole is this and how, you know, do you think we can work together to stop digging deeper and help you maybe to get out of the hole?

And so we would start thinking through the possibilities and I wouldn't promise anything that I couldn't deliver and I certainly wouldn't lie about the difficulty of the situation.

I wouldn't add any new information information that she didn't know That would make things more difficult, but I would actually put to her what about if I actually had a chat to Mick and Asked him what the possibilities are here because I'm not in charge here.

Mick is in charge. This is a Potentially really serious situation and actually makes the person who needs to make these decisions I'm not the I'm not the main person here Good,

but good and I would be her advocate to try and get the best outcome for her So you do talk to Mick you explain the situation you explain what Jodie has offered Mick what about you would you you've got classroom of kids in there potentially held up with a gun Are you going to bend the truth?

Are you going to tell Jodie? Yeah, we can do that We can get you and the kids up to your mothers and the truth or will you be honest as well? Mark, we have to float to the as close to the truth as we can because if a lie is established If we are your trust is disconnected in the early stages and we don't have control of the room and the children Then that could lead to a catastrophic outcome So we need to we

need to be truthful Go on and and deal with what we've got working to isolate Jodie and have them conversations about what can and can't happen absolutely the children Okay,

good so even though it might prolong it a bit. You're not going to Well, you're not going to betray her trust. I guess Kate. Let me let me bring you in here Kate Because a young female reporter not the one that you know This is a young very inexperienced reporter on the scene She rings you for advice because she's been told by her editor that she has to find some crying frightened mothers and interview them on



# Transcript

camera and she's a bit uncomfortable What should she do? What are you gonna advise her to do? I would tell her that this is a really important story because the journal journalism in this type of situation can be a real conduit for for information for the community there might be families out there that I don't know what's going on or whatever But that this is a really important role that as long as she is ethical

as long as she asks permission If she goes up to someone who's who's distressed, but as long as she declares who she is And asks for permission to interview So I was gonna say I mean are we really thinking that that's informed consent you comfortable That's informed consent the part of the mother.

Yeah, I look into yeah, absolutely I always when journalists say to me, you know, when does informed consent not operate? I usually say if you've been ethical if you've been Thoughtful and transparent if the person is dissociative then that's not informed consent because the person's not there They're caught up in their own trauma and their own situation So they can't give informed consent if someone's dissociative,

but if someone is You know not not lights on no one home sort of thing and they are thoughtful and ethical and ask permission Absolutely,

okay. I reckon that's a thin line. But anyway, we'll we'll see how it pans out Kate We'll see how it pans out anyway The bottom line is that Mick and his expert team of negotiators with some fantastic help from Lyn from May from Andrew Have managed to do a great job Jody tells Mick that she will come out The incident has lasted around 90 minutes about an hour and a half.

She comes out of the classroom She doesn't seem to be carrying anything. She empties her pockets She puts her phone which has a black case on the ground. She puts her hand up Mick. What happens then?

be Taken into custody. She's there's been an incident where she's held to this criminality involved to you So you're going to arrest her?

At this stage, Mark, we've got, there's grants to arrest her, but it's also, it's a way for us to control the situation. She'll, we would,

we would seek her compliance right through to the, anonymity from the media, from the prying eyes and explain the situations, but we've got a number of situations to deal with here,

none less important than her mental situation. Because we were even, even under arrest, we're going to seek the guidance of, of forensic medical officers from the outset.

Okay, so you're going to try and persuade her to come with you without having to arrest her at this point, she'll come back to the station with you, is that right?

She'll be placed under arrest, Mark, in the, in the Williamsville, yep, absolutely. Okay, so she's placed under arrest, so the, the children go home with Jim,

they're taken to the station, an interview, she's held overnight to appear in court the next morning. May and Andrew, I'm just interested in what you're going to do now.

You've got a huge bunch of patients been queuing up while, while this has been happening. Do you have any sort of tactics to psychologically, emotionally reset after what has been a pretty difficult kind of experience?

And you've now got to give all your attention to your patient who's sitting in front of you. Do I, do you want to suggest how you would go about doing that? Well,

no, if you'd like to start, I'm, or I'm happy to go. Look, I think that would you like to start? No, no, you, you go Andrew, yes. Good training helps you to manage these situations.



# Transcript

And actually, these situations are upsetting for everybody, and it's hard to watch someone you care about and have cared for for some time go through a difficult situation. But also it's important to recognize that despite your best efforts people make decisions that make their lives worse and that as long as you haven't contributed to making that situation worse.

I think it's you know, you can look at your own efforts and think that you have done the best that you could that you had clearly thought through before what you would do in these situations because you trained for those sorts of things and that actually there is a principle called dignity of risk that people need to be allowed enough freedom to be able to make decisions about their life even if they're lousy

decisions and okay, if you particularly in the field of personality disorder, you'd need to get used to the idea that people have the freedom to make bad decisions about their life and that you can help them to think through that and prevent that in the future. Okay,

so all the way from that situation to the next one it doesn't stop me feeling upset about for you know for Jodi, but I got on with my day's work. Okay,

so you refocus on the patient in front of you may do you want to add anything to that? Yeah, look I'd make a comment. I'd have to take a deep breath myself. I think well,

I do appreciate I think as medical professionals, I mean often we do end up in emergency situations I would probably say that this would really count as high up there in terms of the emergency situations we'd ever manage.

It's definitely not a common day occurrence, even for those of us who do work with personality disorder and with trauma and abuse and violence.

So I would probably comment that this would be probably on the pointy end of what we would normally manage. Having said that, as Andrew said, that there are some processes about how most practices do manage emergency situations and that stems from how you might manage on an individual sense,

which looks at, I guess, our own personal acknowledgement that this was upsetting, this was distressing. We are concerned for the person who is involved, the family who is involved,

plus I'm probably also looking after a lot of the members of the school as well, and I'm probably getting people coming in and telling me, "Did you hear what actually happened?" As I'm also dealing with it at the same time,

and it's a small community. So, you know, I am probably looking after the whole community who are all involved with that at the same time. So there's elements of that, plus also my staff within the practice who also know Jodi,

who also know Jim, who also know the children and the other children who are going to be involved. So there's those aspects, as well as the practical elements of the fact that, you know, how do you reschedule and restructure,

and recognising as well that there will be ongoing repercussions for the family, medical, legally, and ongoing care, which is going to happen as well. OK,

so you're both going to be, well, everybody's going to be pretty tired by the end of the day. Jodi is going to the magistrates court in the morning. Her lawyers are going to ask for bail. Will you oppose bail,

Mick? Yes, in line with the need for medical intervention and support so that we're not, you know, we're dealing with blow-on consequences should they arise.



# Transcript

So we'll oppose bail. Just very briefly, Mae, Jodi's got no history of violence. You know, she's very remorseful and so on. You don't think she's a risk in terms of her own mental health and mental health for children.

Will you support her bail application? Yeah look I guess if I needed to write a medical legal report because that's exactly what's being asked here she's possibly got a solicitor or legal aid I guess at some point she's got legal aid yeah yeah yeah so so I would ask them to actually give some advice about what exactly they're requesting me to write in a medical legal report and then in a medical legal report I can

really just write what my observations are of my experience of caring for Jodi would be and so while she hasn't had a previous history of violence this event that's a standard old event is what we're noticing as well as the pattern of interactions which have happened previous to this.

You're sitting on the fence there May give me a yes or no are you going to support her bail or not? I'd support her one you'd be doing an assessment to actually confirm where her current status at the moment bearing in mind that risk assessment varies at every single moment and the fact she got to this point makes you wonder what are the factors which got her to this point and what's going to stop her getting to

this point again so I can't answer yes or no because we actually haven't done a reassessment to work out what's actually going on and it's still and it's still bearing that whole question that Jim's actually said I'm going to potentially take the rights away from the kids and if that's actually her precipitate for why she presented to this in the first place if that's not resolved I don't think we've kind of quite

resolved what her next interactions are going to be. Okay Andrew just in one sentence or two at most are you going to support her bail application? Yeah I what I would do is it's not up to me to decide her future risk.

Now, I'm her private psychiatrist and actually I would request a letter from her lawyer asking me what they're requesting in the report.

I'd ask for her consent to write that. And perhaps it might just be a brief letter at this stage. But from my point of view, I have no reason to oppose her bail.

I would be there supporting her. If there is a question about future risk of violence, I would say the court need to obtain an independent psychiatric assessment of her risk.

Notwithstanding the fact that we're not very good at predicting future risk, but violence risk assessment is a science to some extent.

And there are plenty of people who would be willing to put their kids through school by seeing her. So there would be no shortage of people available. - Fair enough,

Lyn, just in one sentence, it's not gonna be very good for the kids if mum goes to spend her time on remand. Would you support her bail application? - I think it would be pretty hard,

I think, to know without all the other advice from other professionals. So I think I'd be deferring, I think I wouldn't really have enough information to know that. And I think mum getting the net support she needs is what would be best for the kids as well and the safety.

There'd be a fair bit of work around family, I think in terms of how the kids are seeing the mum and what's happened and supporting the family more broadly, I think, so I think it's a much weaker question than I wanted to be sort of getting involved in at that time.



# Transcript

- Well, next morning, Jodie, sorry, May, did you want to say something? I can't hear you. - Mark, I'd probably make the comment though, we're not really being asked as professionals to actually support her bail assessment or not.

We're actually just being asked to write a medical legal report. So I hear what you're saying, but we have to remember what we're actually being asked to in our professional role as well.

Sure. Yeah, OK. So, the system is such that she has to go to court the next morning. You don't really have a lot of time to be bringing in experts and so on. The magistrate is initially very reluctant to give her bail,

given that the fact that the police are opposing bail, the circumstances of what happened, she is not keen. But the magistrate is herself a mother of young children. She knows where it's like to feel really stressed.

She's got some reports from May and from Andrew, and so on. Maybe not as clear-cut as she would like, but they're OK. So, she decides she will grant bail with strict conditions.

So, Jodie has to be released into the care of her mother. She has to go with her mother up to the country. She's not allowed to see the children until the protection order is reviewed,

which, of course, is going to be the next day. So, it's only another 24 hours or so. But I'm afraid that's the way it is, Mick. Some you win, some you lose. And my guess is that judges and magistrates don't always agree with the police.

And in fact, the state of Windsor is particularly lenient about such things, at least at the moment. That is until the next state election when both parties will struggle to outdo each other to prove how tough they are in law and order,

because that's a pretty good vote winner. So, Jodie has released into the care of her mother. She's whisked away at the country. And things have ended relatively peacefully,

I think we have to say. I don't want to minimize it, though. There's a whole number of populations that might be affected. The school community,

of course, the students, the teachers, the parents, the police who might be affected, there's the journalists, there's the health professionals, and so on. And I'd love to go into all of those but we don't really have time to do that.

Just very quickly Lyn, would you, I don't want to minimize it, but nobody was hurt, there were probably no major threats. What are you going to do? Are you going to offer something to the children or to the teachers tomorrow?

Yeah, I think it would be really important. I think the work really begins for the school that next day and I think we would be very grateful. I think that people ended as well as it did and people weren't harmed in the way that they could have been.

But we really need to respect the trauma that the children have been through, the parents not knowing what's happening, the young teacher, the principal and all the community conversations that are happening.

There's a lot of work for the school to do and I think there's a lot of planning to take that into account. And I think some of it's around communication and I think all the media and then the school's role in that,





# Transcript

what it's like for this family, what it's like for these children coming back to school. There would be a lot of planning around that and I think the school would really need to consult with their own media people to say what are the messages we need to send here and how do we respect the fear that was there,

but also how do we respect the family and their privacy and their children, particularly the right to be at the school. So they'd be that kind of work. Then there'd be the support work and identifying who are the people impacted and what needs do they have,

both staff and students and not making assumptions too much. We don't know how the children experience this in that classroom. We don't really know what happened and there'd be a wide range of experiences,

no doubt amongst these seven-year-olds, and supporting the parents as much as the children, I think. So getting as much information out to parents around what might be some normal reactions, hearing,

listening, validating, drawing on those resilient skills, but they're pretty, you know, restricting them really. They're not just your typical resilient skills, but monitoring for a long period of time and having support available for sure.

- So you got plenty of things planned to kind of help them through this next day. Kate, the young reporter who did those interviews with the very distressed mothers is being vilified on social media.

They are calling her a vulture. They're saying she's exploiting people's grief. There are vile things said about her. In fact, there's even threats for sexual nature against her.

Is this unusual for a journalist to be sort of trolled like this after reporting something? - Not at all. It's completely typical. It's what's happening now, especially for women journalists.

But in this case, Mark, we also know that WBC were also there doing fabulous and important reporting. The Windsor Broadcasting Corporation. And so I did link this journalist up with some of the journalists from WBC because they've been doing some great coverage on mental health and family violence.

And in fact, they've been speaking to some of Lyn's folks and the school and the media have been working together, which is a really important thing to be a collaborator with the media because the media has a really important role in these sorts of stories of educating the community and helping the community understand but also feel safe again.

So I linked this journalist that has been vilified and that is very typical up with one of the WBC peer support journalists trained because WBC had us in there doing psychoeducation.

And yeah, go on. - That's great. That is great to hear. She kind of feels that she needs a bit more. She's heard about the Dart Foundation for Journalists and Trauma. She heard about the local branch,

the Dart Centre Australia Pacific. And so she contacts you through them. Are you able to put her in touch with someone who can help her perhaps a therapist or someone if she needs it? - Absolutely.

So what I'd be doing is talking about, talking with her about her needs and what she would like. Would she like to see a therapist? Would she like to see, what sort of person person would she like to see and talk through the options with her and then I would be able to link her up with appropriate therapists if that's the path that she wanted to go down At first she wanted to speak to a peer supporter,

but then she found that that sort of lived its life And so she was wanting some more clinical sort of support She was I believe she was having some nightmares and and the trolling was really taking its toll So I linked her up with a good clinical psychologist who sees quite a few journalists in the area Okay,

thank you for that May I've got literally 30 seconds if you would like to make a very quick comment Look, I just wanted to also just make a further comment that this is a really tragic situation But I said



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that often sometimes you see these experiences of Retaliatory abuse and violence on one partner because they may feel fearful about a response from the other partner So it can actually seem that the person who does

the act of abuse of violence is the aggressor But it might be a bit confusing in this situation because she might actually be responding in a fear response Because she feels the kids are being taken away and there's a coercive event So it's actually quite complicated in terms of how DV might actually be playing out in this setting So I just wanted to make that clear because it wasn't it's not always obvious and The media portrayal is going to be of her as the aggressor Whereas it might not actually be the situation and she might be living with that ongoing Secondary trauma of then seeing her name in the media Subsequently from all Absolutely, absolutely, which would be pretty bad for any of us let alone if we're struggling already. Thank you for that May Look, as you know, our society is obsessed with real life crime And sure enough, within a week of the incident happening, the first episode of the podcast serial has already hit the airwaves. You can get it from wherever you get your podcasts. Netflix is going to rush out a docudrama.

They've already signed Nicole Kidman to play Jodie and Russell Crowe to play Jim. Both of them are 30 years too old, but never mind, they're crowd pullers, so they've signed them up.

But I'm afraid I'm contractually bound not to reveal the names of the actors who are going to portray our panel members. So you'll just have to speculate on who they might be.

But I know I'm going to be glued to that Netflix special. In the meantime, we have to leave the suburb of Williamsville in the state of Windsor. We have to leave the Robinson family,

but we will keep our fingers firmly crossed for Jim and Jodie, as well as the twins, Shayna Matilda. And I think we can be reasonably confident that they're in very good hands with their GP,

May, and their psychiatrist, Andrew, not to mention the support they're getting at the school through Lyn and her colleagues. So for now, I'd like you to join me in thanking our magnificent panellists,

Lyn O'Grady, Mick Elliott, Mae Su, Andrew Chanan, and Kate McMahon. I can hear the applause resounding through cyberspace across Australia.

The panel were magnificent. Thank you so much indeed. It was wonderful. Can I say thank you also to JT Productions for the tech staff. Thank you also to MHPN for organizing this hypothetical.

And most importantly, thank you very much to all of you for joining us for this live event and for those of you who are watching us later on a recording. And I just hope that you've enjoyed it as much as we have.

We've Keep an eye on the MHPN website for the next hypothetical, which is scheduled, I think, for May 2024. And please complete the survey. I know it's a pain,

but if you can complete the survey, it's really important for us to know what you thought of tonight's hypothetical and what we could perhaps do better. But at that point, that's all from me.

Thank you very much again to everybody, and bye for now.