

# Educational First Aid in Crisis: Input on how to communicate with students about the terrorist bomb attack in Oslo and the mass murder at Utøya in 2011

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*- For primary, lower secondary & upper secondary school*

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*This document was circulated to Norwegian schools prior to school starting in August 2011 by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. A second document was sent to schools prior to the court proceedings in April 2012. These two documents provided principles for a national strategy on classroom communication about the 22 July terror attack in Norwegian schools. The communication strategy is a part of, what in these documents are defined as, Educational First Aid in Crisis. The target group for the preventive measures is all students that are indirectly affected through exposure to high-intensity media coverage of the terror attack.*

This manual provides suggestions for how teachers can approach their students at the start of the academic year regarding how to prepare for a holistic approach that can provide for processing, understanding and learning, and ensure a return to regular school activities after the terrorist attacks. The manual does not address help to relatives of victims or assistance to survivors. Those directly affected receive help and support through implementation of the local disaster-preparedness plans existing in each municipality and in the affected schools.

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## Introduction

Our leading politicians and social researchers have already said that the terrorist acts that took place in the Government Quarter and on Utøya island on 22 July 2011 will affect and change the next generation. With this perspective as a backdrop, it is essential to view our writing here as an attempt to structure the schools' initial encounter with the students in this new era, as the nation's schoolchildren are returning to their classrooms. The first question is likely to be about what names the schools will use to write and speak about these atrocities. We propose that they should refer to the bomb in the Government Quarter as a terrorist act, similar to what the students see in most media reports. Furthermore, we propose *not* to talk about *the incident* at Utøya island. This is about mass murder, perpetrated by a mass murderer.

We have no ready-made recipe for how the schools should deal with a terrorist act in the Government Quarter that left eight people dead and the Government high-rise with the Prime Minister's office and the adjacent ministries in ruins. We have no recipe for how the schools should address the fact that the bomber made his way to the AUF youth camp at Utøya where he executed 69 people – adolescents and their attendants. We would nevertheless not recommend that each principal and each teacher find their own ways of dealing with this. The suggestions that we are presenting here are rooted in experience-based educational first aid for crisis situations and are intended as a framework for a shared and more systematic approach with the students.

We wish to draw attention to two issues, even though they might be obvious. First, this did not happen yesterday. This means that the students who are coming back to school will already have witnessed the terror and mass murder for several days. They have collected their experiences from various sources in various contexts: some in holiday destinations far from Norway, others on holiday in Oslo, and still others in local communities where the coffins with the victims arrived, or from the survivors on the front page of the local newspaper. This means that all students, from first grade to upper secondary levels, have already established an

understanding, an attitude and a preliminary form of processing. The schools are thus not invited to the initial confrontation with the disaster. We could rather use Churchill's words by saying that this is "the end of the beginning". In our opinion, this is exactly where educational first aid in crisis has its forte.

Our second reminder is about the need to establish an exchange and a dialogue which is adapted to the age and level of development for each group of students. This pertains to the core skills of educators, and in this manual we will assume that the teachers are experts in adapting the form and content to the students' level. Nevertheless, towards the end of this manual we will put forward some suggestions for how to deal with the most difficult question that all students ask themselves, irrespective of age: "*Why did he do it?*"

## **The strong reactions gradually recede**

The spontaneous need felt by most children for wanting to talk about the gruesome impressions from the terror and mass murder will gradually recede. This need for expression will be at its greatest during the first few weeks after the incident. However, because of the continuing and persistent media attention, this need to talk will also be felt at the start of the school year when classmates are reunited after the summer holidays. But why is educational first aid in crisis important?

Educational first aid in crisis is not therapy. It involves putting important things in their place to allow normal life to continue as before. We have not forgotten the key role played by the home environment, nor the importance of play and enjoyment. However, after the summer holiday, schools will play a key role in approaching the students with an educational first aid strategy that can unite them by providing an overview and understanding. It is recommended that the school year begins with a remembrance ceremony for the victims of Utøya and the Government Quarter. When compared to the ceremonies for victims of the tsunami, which were held in all schools in 2005, the timing will be different this time, since all funerals and official ceremonies have already taken place. The memorial ceremonies should point the way forward, and focus on positive aspects such as successful crisis management and the enhanced sense of community produced by the huge memorial events held nationwide. The ceremony will constitute an element of the schools' educational first aid strategy.

With respect to the initiation of counselling about the terrorist acts and the mass murder, we have one important rule to emphasise: you have to engage in order to be able to disengage. A tenth-grader explains this rule on the basis of his experiences after the tsunami disaster of 2005: "It was OK to talk about it for a while, in order to put it *out* of my mind". What the student describes is his engagement with the frightening thoughts, which enables him to disengage from them more effectively and take control of disturbing mental images. We do know that students in all age groups have been exposed to upsetting impressions from the media and the Internet. Many of them will have experienced strong emotional reactions, and above all, the students will return to school with a number of unanswered questions.

## **General goal: To establish an overview and an understanding**

It is a general goal of the dialogue with the students about the terrorist act and the mass murder that the teacher should use the sessions to establish some form of coherence.

Coherence must be established on two levels. First, the students should be provided with a judicious account in sufficient detail of how a bomb was set off in Oslo and of the young people who were shot at Utøya. In addition, the youngest students should be informed about the comprehensive rescue efforts that were immediately set in motion, and updated about how survivors and their relatives will receive help over time. Students in lower and upper secondary school can be provided with more detailed knowledge about reactions and treatments for exposure to traumatic events (see detailed descriptions later in this document).

The other kind of coherence that we wish to establish is one of thoughts and emotions in each student. This concerns the opportunity to express thoughts and emotions and to be able to put them in perspective. For the youngest students, this is about communicating safety and processing the fear from the terrorist acts that will affect the children's daily life and future. This also concerns thoughts and emotions about how terrorism is the worst possible scenario for those who experience it, and that among those who were present, some were children and adolescents of their own age. One goal is to relate terror and mass murder to notions of values and morality related to what people are capable of doing to each other. To establish coherence in the students' minds, the material presented by the teacher must be:

- *intelligible*: it must be sufficiently specific and immediate to allow the students to integrate it into their cognitive frameworks,
- *manageable*: it must be sufficiently approachable to let the students absorb it rather than reject it; meaning that in practice they will be able to voice their own thoughts and emotions,
- *meaningful*: it must concern them and they must be left with a clear understanding of why we as adults wish to speak with them about upsetting matters rather than avoiding them.

The latter point is of considerable significance for further efforts. The class must establish a clear understanding of why they will be provided with an opportunity to process and work out such horrible matters as terrorist acts and mass murder. The students will have varying reactions to the inclusion of this topic in the school day. We believe that many of them will feel a certain level of discomfort. Recognising and confirming this discomfort will be essential. To the youngest children, the concept of "talking medicine" can be provided as a justification. The challenge to the individual teacher will be to facilitate this work in such a manner as to let the children feel that it is meaningful, that it enhances their sense of safety, and that they acquire knowledge which is important to them.

Establishing a well-communicated, shared platform for this work in schools will be of the utmost importance for those students who have traumatic experiences of their own, having fled from war and persecution. A further group of students to whom special attention must be paid include those from Muslim backgrounds. The perpetrator has clearly declared his hatred of Islamism and Muslim immigrants in Norway and Europe.

## The therapeutic perspective

Because of the unfathomable cruelty of the acts and the extremely detailed communication of them by the media, we choose to regard the students' encounter with the facts as a form of crisis. Many will not have learned coping strategies for terror and upsetting situations from normal social life – and certainly not when these are so gruesome and in such proximity. Such

strategies need to be learned and this is part of the educational first aid strategy. The students may react with fear, insecurity and anxiety. Some develop physical symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches and insomnia. The students can be greatly helped by being provided with an opportunity to express themselves, talk about their fears, process their grief and despair, and express their compassion for and solidarity with innocent victims of their own age. The students must thus be reassured that these are natural reactions and that the most upsetting ones will gradually diminish over time. It helps to talk about it, it helps to be in the company of others, and it helps to go to school, play and do more of the ordinary things one usually does.

*Age and level of development:* It is self-evident that the therapeutic aspects of alleviating anxiety and fear will be most important for the youngest students, although they will not be absent from the approach with the oldest ones. The groups that we have in mind include those who have special needs stemming from previous traumatic experiences in their personal history. For the oldest students, from fifth grade and up, we recommend that additional emphasis should be placed on the educational aspects after the memorial ceremonies, while paying close attention to students who are noticeably upset.

Various faith-based communities involve students in rituals, such as prayer and lighting of candles. We have had national ceremonies and memorial services; these are examples of processing a disastrous situation. Now, the children must be accompanied into the next phase.

## The crucial factual stage

The terrorist attack and the mass murder have attracted massive media coverage all over the world and, of course, especially in Norway. News journalists have been working around the clock to sort through the information by selecting and assembling the pieces of the mosaic to produce a comprehensible whole. We as adults depend on this to establish coherence and meaning in the events in order to make them comprehensible and manageable. Schools serve an important function as a “newsroom” for their students. Many of the tasks related to this role are on well-known educational ground. They include providing the students with:

- examples from history to learn about the nature of terrorism
- knowledge about the causes of terrorism
- knowledge about the nature of right-wing extremism and information on how these groups regard terrorist acts
- knowledge about the way in which other countries describe Norway’s choice to counter terrorism by more openness and more democracy
- knowledge about the legal system: what is happening with the perpetrator, his conviction and imprisonment
- knowledge about the rescue efforts; the immediate actions as well as the follow-up of those directly affected and their relatives over time
- knowledge about reactions: communication of knowledge about how to help those who grieve, how to deal with one’s own grief and why students need to shield themselves from retrieving upsetting images and stories available on the Internet
- insight into how the entire country has reacted with memorial services, and explanations of how participating in shared ceremonies can be healthy
- help to students in all age groups to channel grief and compassion into constructive action

PM Jens Stoltenberg has said that Norway will never be the same, but that we all have a responsibility for how Norway is going to change. What does this imply for students in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school?

At the time of this writing, professionals as well as publicists have voiced their opinion that we need to channel our anger and rage into constructive action once we have emerged from the shock of this happening here.

Primary and lower secondary schools have recently obtained a new tool to help their students understand crises that are being presented in the news. Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's "Supernytt" programme is a newscast for children where professional journalists seek to present the news in an intelligible and manageable way. For the start of the school year, "Supernytt" has prepared a TV broadcast for children which summarises the terrorist attack and the mass murder. This broadcast will be available on the NRK website and may serve as a coherent source of information to students. The "Supernytt" web pages may also provide inspiration and input to primary and lower secondary schools for use in their ongoing work related to educational first aid.

## **Morality, values and solidarity**

During the last decade, the development of morality and learning of values in childhood have become an increasingly relevant topic for psychological and educational research. The main conclusion is that children's attitudes are not established in a vacuum. They derive their strongest impulses from "the hustle and bustle" of daily life and the media. If the immediate adults, parents and teachers, in the children's life are evasive and vague with regard to moral dilemmas, peer groups and the media will fill the void. This difficult debate concerning morality and values must be given emphasis in the schools' teaching practices. Terrorist events give rise to such an educational opportunity.

In this context, we wish to encourage schools to enable the students to show their solidarity – for which the memorial services provide such an occasion. In addition to information and counselling, openness can be demonstrated to ideas and opportunities for how students can specifically contribute to the "New Norway". We do not propose this as a therapeutic activity for the children. Neither should it be presented in a way suggesting that the children should now assume responsibility which would be far too great for them, since this would only exacerbate their sense of powerlessness. The responsibility for Norwegian security is the unquestionable responsibility of the adult world and the nation's government. Moreover, the students must learn that our authorities provide excellent health services and support to those afflicted and their relatives. The point here is the inherent value in channelling a sense of solidarity and engagement that would otherwise just dissolve into indifference – a sense of "nothing we can do matters, nothing can be done for us, we are just children and hence only spectators". What we have in mind is a reinforcement of the sense that we care and that Norway stands united – this has an inherent value.



## Vulnerable groups of students

This is a general topic and should be addressed not only in the schools, but also in the school health services, the educational and psychological counselling services and the psychiatry services for children and adolescents. Students who have been affected by previous crises and traumas are particularly exposed, since the strong and persistent news coverage of disasters serves to remind them of previous events. Experience from the massive news coverage of the Iraq war in 2003 and the tsunami disaster in 2004-5 has taught us that schools and their collaboration partners ought to be more aware of the needs of this group of students. It is not sufficient for the school to wait for the students to ask for help; the students should be approached more actively by way of a direct initiative.

*Those concerned are individuals.* Those who are affected by a disaster or other external, dramatic events invariably have one thing in common: each of them is an individual. This is our basis for underscoring that one can never elaborate a crisis response plan or a management scheme that will suit everyone. This does not imply that specific plans will be unusable or inappropriate. Neither do we imply that an individual approach or therapy will invariably be the best alternative. We simply assert that all plans need to be designed, implemented and evaluated with a view to helping and supporting individuals. In practice, this also implies that the collective manifestations such as memorial services and assemblies of all students in the sports hall must be planned and designed in a way that centres on the individual. The same applies to the more detailed and in depth classroom communication, as well as to the long-term follow-up of those who need it most.

*Counselling of parents is always relevant:* Parental counselling concerns what they can do at home and advice about when parents should become concerned and seek help from professionals.

## What we can say about long-term effects – to the oldest students

We have noticed that older students, towards the end of lower and into upper secondary levels, are concerned about the situation of the survivors of the Utøya massacre – whose lives were saved, but who were exposed to the most unthinkable experiences and impressions. What is happening with them, how can they go on living with the disturbing impressions? Some in fact ask whether they will be damaged for life. We actually have ample knowledge of this from previous experience and research. We must be truthful, which involves communicating positive as well as grievous messages regarding the future of the young survivors of Utøya. The good news includes all the research that has been done with regard to provision of help for chronic traumas, especially if those who are most affected can receive qualified help at an early stage. We can also tell the young people that support from friends is extremely important to gather the strength necessary to confront the traumas and to thereby recover. The sombre perspective is that the situation that occurred during the diabolically scheming assault was the worst imaginable: they were threatened with death, they saw friends being executed, many were convinced that they would never escape from the island alive, a long time passed and they were distrustful of the helpers, because they initially had believed that the killer, dressed in a police uniform, was a helper. In addition, they are likely to carry profound grief for their friends and companions. We are forced to admit that we possess no research that might give grounds for strong optimism. What will be decisive for them is to receive the best follow-up that we can conceivably provide.

We have reason to believe that the strong impressions will recede over time. However, in some they will not recede. These individuals will need therapy and keeping an eye on their reactions is therefore crucial. Many of those who were at Utøya during the attack will experience so-called post-traumatic reactions. Following especially serious events, it is common for one in three to experience continued reactions during the first year. A traumatic event is characterised by personal exposure to a life-threatening situation, or witnessing somebody else in such a situation. The affected person is exposed to strong sensations of fear and a sense of helplessness. Traumatic events include war experiences, traffic accidents, robbery and assault, rape, natural disasters and terrorism.

Three types of reactions in particular tend to accompany traumatic events: flashbacks, avoidance and physical arousal. These are natural reactions to an unnatural event. However, when the symptoms persist for a long time and affect us to the extent that they hinder us from going about our daily lives, we refer to it as PTSD – post-traumatic stress disorder.

*Flashbacks* mean that the afflicted person is troubled by so-called invasive memories, causing him or her to re-experience the event. This can take the form of persistent, intrusive thoughts that are unwanted, or in nightmares. When waking up from such a nightmare, the body has turned on the alarm system and one's pulse is racing, the person feels frightened and experiences a renewed life threat for no reason. *Avoidance* involves attempts to steer clear of thoughts, persons, places, images and situations which act as reminders of the event. This can be very strenuous and consume a lot of energy. *Physical arousal* refers to a sense of bodily unease; the sufferer has trouble concentrating, is constantly on the alert for dangers, develops severe sleeping problems and reacts strongly to unexpected, harmless events.

## Why did he do it?

We are aware that many teachers for obvious reasons would want to avoid focusing on this question. To the children, however, this is the key question, because it is crucial to the new sense of safety they are trying to establish: safety that this will not happen again. On previous occasions, when we have explained to the youngest children any cruel and frightening events, such as the school massacres in Finland, which have certain similarities with this case, we have used the concept of “erroneous thoughts” or “error thoughts” as a basis. When this youngster in Finland obtained a gun and ran to school to shoot the classrooms to kill students and teachers, it was because he believed himself to be a warrior or at war. And that he was a hero who should save the world. This was a completely distorted idea, since there was no war and his actions were only abhorrent and terrible. His error thoughts had become totally morbid. Fortunately, only very rarely will someone be possessed by such morbidly error thoughts that they act out their twisted persuasions – and this provides at least a modicum of comfort. Therefore, we are no longer afraid when the perpetrator has been taken by the police. We have no fear that it will happen again in the same way. We also explain to the children that being abhorred/shocked is not the same as being afraid. We are abhorred/shocked because this is so cruel and unusual, but we are not afraid that it will happen again here in our society.

To the older students, we can obviously provide no guarantee that it will not happen again, but we nevertheless remain certain that life will go on much the same as before. The topic of



“error thoughts” has clearly struck a chord among the older students when it has turned out that cruelties such as massacres have been perpetrated by people who have been living with computer games and web communities populated by others with error thoughts, enabling them to exacerbate and confirm their hate-filled fantasies. Finally, they were spending so much of their time in what we referred to as the “mental caves” on the web that they lost contact with good friends who could have corrected their error thoughts (see “Life in the mental caves” in the appendix, describing the second school massacre in Finland).

It is essential to show respect for the children’s intelligence, and not fail them at this crucial point in trying to provide an explanation, neither in the here and now, nor in the future. The process of explaining the perpetrator and how Norway will change is already well underway in the press. A good starting-point for a dialogue with the older students, from lower secondary levels and up, can be found in the weekly supplement to the *Dagbladet* daily from 30 July. Here, 25 prominent social figures were asked about their ideas of what the terrorist attack and the mass murder will mean to Norway and her future. Of course, they touch upon the question of why and what we can do to prevent this from happening again. Their nuanced, varied and well-formulated reflections are suitable as a background for our own reflections as well as a source of excerpts and quotes that can be used in dialogue with the students.

## Notes to remember

We will conclude by summing up some key points of which we also remind ourselves when speaking with children, and we write them on small, mental Post-It notes that we carry with us. This is what we have written down in our own mental notes:

### **DO NOT WAIT AND SEE – GO AND SEE**

As a teacher, you should actively seek to establish what the children have picked up if you believe that they might be unnecessarily worried by adverse events, at home or in other places. News reports from far-off countries may appear close when the media bring them into their living rooms on a daily basis. Be aware that all newspapers have a children’s page: the front page. All children who can read face it directly on the newsstand or the living-room table. The worst front pages should not lie around.

### **PROVIDE AN ADULT PERSPECTIVE**

Consider how to formulate your ideas when your students have been exposed to front pages with war-type headlines: killed by their mother, strangled in their sleep, killed his daughter with a sledge-hammer. Although we cannot invariably protect them against daily media exposure, we can help them put things in perspective and dispatch their fears to a quiet area of the brain. The same applies when appalling things have happened at home. In this case, you should first try out the things that you plan on saying in the company of other sensible adults.

### **CHILDREN NEED PEGS**

Good pegs are words and concepts enabling the child to establish an understanding at their own level, appropriate for their age. If the child obtains appropriate pegs, they can use them to hang up many unnecessary fears and worries. To small children, “far away, will not come here” could be a good peg for a hurricane. At other times, “happens very rarely, hardly ever, I’m not afraid” may help. Older children need to take a justified part in your own sense of safety.

### **OUR BEST ADULT EXPLANATIONS**

When awful things have happened, children ask for a clear statement from caring adults. If strong emotions are in play, they fail to store this explanation properly in their memory. They will need to have it repeated. If there are large variations from one time to the next, this will confuse them. The explanations must not gradually grow in abhorrence, and the worst parts must therefore be included in the first explanatory conversation. They want, and deserve, our best adult version worded in a language they can understand.

### **OPEN UP TO UNDERSTAND – CLOSE DOWN TO HAVE PEACE OF MIND**

The objective of the difficult conversation about the appalling events is to let the child understand and calm down from talking about them. Therefore, we make sure that they really do so. Since our conversation opens up for talking about the terrifying events, we need to explain to the child that we do it with the purpose of letting them establish control over the upsetting thoughts. The objective is not to elicit strong emotions; the objective is to alleviate the unbearable ones that are already there.

### **CAN WE SPEAK WITH CHILDREN ABOUT ANYTHING?**

Our response would be a conditional affirmative. You need to adapt your approach carefully to the time, place and the child's age. Do not let this frighten you. From our practice as an educational psychologist and child psychologist we cannot recall having had children referred to us who have suffered injury from openness. Provided that the child was well prepared and we have taken the time to consider the matter, so that we could move slowly, although without hesitation. Our work has focused on the damage inflicted by the silence, the confusion, the secrets and the imagined horrors.

### **IT IS A CHALLENGE TO LISTEN SO THAT CHILDREN WILL TALK, AND TO TALK SO THAT CHILDREN WILL LISTEN**

If you respond like an encyclopaedia when the child brings up a difficult topic, they will look for the door. If you sit there silently listening, they will do the same, and they will not dare talk to you. You need to strike a balance and neither be underactive so that the conversation dies nor too overactive as this will stifle the child's attention. When talking to children, it helps to keep in mind that we have one mouth and two ears, meaning that we should listen twice as long as we speak.

### **THE GENERATIONAL OBLIGATION**

This refers to the inherent practice found in all cultures, whereby the adult generation systematically transfers their most important experiences to the younger generation. It is the responsibility of adults to help children understand their environment. Words and concepts are the tools of the mind. It is our duty to fill the children's toolbox with specific tools for them to use.

*It is unfair that children should be twice as fearful as us adults when they do not need to be, just because we do not have the courage to listen to them. It is not harmful for children to speak, and it is not wrong for us to listen.*

*Appendix:* On the previous school shootings in Finland.

We added this old text because it might serve as a note of reflection on social support, social isolation and lack of social control.

## Life in the mental caves

The background to this title is the information which has been uncovered after the two school murders in Finland. We are aware that disasters of this type are associated with the prevalence and uncontrolled spread of guns which fall into the hands of persons who live in the borderlands, mentally speaking. The new element is life in the mental caves, as we have chosen to refer to it. We are thinking of life on the web. There, they can seek each other out, sharing their most deviant and perverted hatreds, drawn from their own chaotic minds, targeted at authorities and finally all of humankind. When some of them emerge from the cave, gun in hand, to publish their intentions, they are served with an opportunity to present their own self-image, which now has become inflated beyond all measure. They go to a school to put the murders into effect. Therefore, after the previous disaster, we have a new term: *school shooting*. We are not unconditionally pleased with this. On the one hand, the word has weaker associations of seriousness than, for example, school massacre or school assassination. But why should *school* have to be included? After all, those who are murdered are in fact people. Is it only a communicative simplification similar to the Hadeland murders, the Fusa killings and the Åsta accident? Or does it take root because the school is more involved than the Hadeland region was?

First, we will take a step back in time to Columbine High School in Jefferson, Colorado on 20 April (Hitler's birthday) 1999. In some of the caves, this is often a big day. Later on, it transpired that these youths were two lone wolves who had found each other as well as others exactly there, in the caves. The writings that could be found on their websites turned out to be a mishmash of incoherent ideology, actually mostly unrelated to knowledge about Nazism and Hitler, but replete with anger, revenge and scorn. The American Teachers' Association took a very serious view of the Columbine massacre. There, 12 students and a teacher were killed. Subsequently, the teachers analysed what they referred to as "The Secret Life of Our Teenagers". The analysis concluded that the schools had failed to undertake enough to fetch those on the "periphery" back into a normalising and positive community. The teachers also made a point of the fact that schools are closed institutions which fail to take the opportunity to open their doors to varied leisure activities involving a wide range of associations and clubs. This could serve to prevent the lone wolves from seeking out affiliation exclusively underground, or more correctly, in the mental caves of the web. We have no knowledge about the extent to which this produced any changes, but it nevertheless lends support to those who claim that we must reinforce inclusion and prevention, so that the evil cannot reach us.

Now we can read that Pekka-Eric Auvinen, from the first massacre at the town of Jokela, obviously served as a model to Matti Juhani Saari in the far away town of Kauhajoki. And moreover, they had found each other long ago down there in the caves, and most likely also

met in person. This gives a completely new dimension to the speculations about contagion effects. There is a difference between loose assumptions about quick copycat effects on the one hand and acts that emerge from a community of cave dwellers on the other. We have a lot on our minds and there is a lot we can do. Alertness to what happens on the web, under cover of darkness as well as what is published in broad daylight for everybody to see, was actually one of the main preventional messages after the first disaster in Finland. It is more than just thought-provoking that the young people of Kauhajoki had taken this very seriously and submitted several reports of concern of the future shooter which the school and the caretaker in particular, forwarded to the police. They failed. It is difficult for us to reject the assertions of these young people, who claim that the latest disaster could have been prevented if the police had lent an ear to the students.

Returning to the school shootings, the school massacres and the school assassinations: has the school become a target because it is the gateway to a bright future for the privileged, while simultaneously representing a steep downward path for those who are doomed to failure and join forces in a hatred of everything and everybody? Is it the reflection of the schools' double standards that we can see in the pale computer light illumining the young faces in the caves?

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