



About This Guide:

'Don't Waste It' is a powerful 30-minute documentary that tells Daniel's story, the Foundation's journey, and the ongoing fight to keep kids safe. This guide is a companion to support parents, caregivers and educators to have trauma-informed interactions with young people both before and after viewing the film, and to facilitate meaningful conversations.

'Don't Waste It':

A Companion Guide for parents, caregivers and educators.



About the film

Through the voices of Bruce and Denise Morcombe, the first section of the film traces their relentless search for Daniel and their transformation of grief into a nationwide movement for child safety. From the heartbreaking events of 2003 to the founding of the Daniel Morcombe Foundation in 2005, the documentary illustrates how one family's tragedy sparked a lasting mission to educate, protect, and empower children across Australia.

Through scenarios, the second half of the film speaks directly to teens aged 13 to 15 acting as an opportunity to start important conversations about safety in the physical and online world.

Fostering a safe and supportive environment before viewing

'Don't Waste It' shares the real story of Daniel Morcombe and his family, and it includes content related to child abduction, child abuse and the loss of a child.

Research has shown more than two in five Australians (39.4%) have experienced childhood maltreatment (ACMS, 2023). This tells us that it's likely classrooms will include students who have experienced or are experiencing maltreatment; and that adults facilitating this material may also be victim/survivors of child maltreatment (even though this may not be known by others).

Below are some suggestions for taking a trauma-informed approach before and after screening the film. You can learn more about trauma-informed classrooms [here](#).



Suggestions - BEFORE screening to young people

- **View the film yourself** - check in with yourself and choose a time to watch which supports your own wellbeing. Reach out for support for yourself if you'd find it helpful (info below).
- **Make a note** of any topics or discussions your young person/ people might find challenging.
- Try to plan your viewing session at a time of the day and in an **environment that feels safe** for your young person/ people, and which provides ample time before and after for discussion.
- Equip any **other adults** who will be part of this screening or facilitating discussion with information about the content so they can make decisions about their wellbeing.
- Plan for a **strengths-based** conversation with your young person/ people - ie. there are risks in the world, but they are capable of using their skills and tools to make informed choices and advocate for themselves.
- If you're an educator, consider letting young people, parents/ caregivers know you'll be screening the film with **advance notice** so they can organise anything they'd benefit from in relation to their wellbeing. This may also encourage the conversation about safety and help-seeking at home.
- At the beginning of the session, let your young person/ people know what they'll be watching, why, and any challenging topics you noted down. Understanding this information in advance means they can prepare themselves and **make decisions about their own wellbeing**.
- Encourage your young person/ people to use their agency to look after themselves. Describe any **supports** they may be able to access - eg. Taking breaks, choosing not to watch, speaking with support people, etc.

Suggestions - AFTER screening to young people

- Remind them of the supports available to them:
 - In your **individual environment** (eg. school, family, local organisations)
 - Support services available **online and via phone** (suggestions below) if they would like to talk through any of what they've seen or if they'd like to speak to someone about harm a young person may be experiencing
 - Emphasise that these supports are **always available**, not just today.
- Remind your young person/ people that although there are risks in the world, **they are capable** of using skills and tools to make informed choices and advocate for themselves. This can be a helpful place to jump into a conversation-based activity if you choose to.



Example Activity

The below questions are examples you may choose to use with your young person/people after watching the film. They are intended as a starting point for conversations, and we encourage you to extend the learning in ways that are appropriate for your young person/people and individual context (eg. Further research into help-seeking, safety planning, etc). You will find further resource recommendations toward the end of this guide.

Curriculum link: ACARA v9 [AC9HP10P08](#) and [AC9HP8P10](#).

Question 1:

At the end, you saw interviews with a range of people. Why do you think these were included?

Responses to scaffold toward: Examples of help-seeking, breaking down of stigma around help-seeking, acknowledgement of barriers to help-seeking, promoting help-seeking.

Question 2:

If a friend told you they were feeling unsafe because of something happening in their real world (ie. Physical world, not online), how could you support them?

Responses to scaffold toward:

- Let them know you believe them.
- Remember, you don't need to have all the answers, but you can offer to help them find out what to do.
- Figure out an adult they feel safe to talk to and offer to go together (Kids Helpline counsellors if there's no one in the person's immediate circle).

Remember, if you found yourself in an unsafe situation, treat yourself with as much kindness as you would a dear friend – it's never your fault. Use these same tools to get help for yourself.

Questions 3:

If you realised something unsafe was happening to you online, it's important to remember it's never your fault and you don't have to solve it on your own. What could you do to get advice or make the unsafe thing stop?

Responses to scaffold toward:

- Screenshot what's happening.
- Report to the platform/block the person.
- Find an adult who can help you – if that's not a person in your immediate circle, who else could it be? (eg. Kids Helpline, eSafety, ACCCE).
- If the adult you choose doesn't react the way you're hoping – keep talking, tell someone else. Keep talking until you find the right person to help you.
- Call Kids Helpline – they can give you advice about exactly what to do.
- Report it.



Question 4:

What are some things we could do to keep ourselves safe...

- In our physical worlds?
- When we're online?

Responses to scaffold toward:

- Have a think about any potential risks in your plans - what things could you do to keep yourself and your mates safe and well?
- Know who you can talk to if things don't go according to plan and you find yourself in trouble.
- Think about tools like Find My Friends and family passwords - talk about if you'd like to use these with your family.
- Be open - sometimes others can see risks we don't. If someone is encouraging you to keep secrets, that might be a clue that they're more keen to keep themselves safe than you.
- Check your privacy settings - you can choose how much people know about you.
- It's good to know the people you're chatting to in real life - sometimes people online pretend to be someone else to harm you (including AI chatbots).



Make a report

If you're aware of harm happening to yourself or a young person you care about, you can report:

- In an emergency, call 000
- Contact your local police on 131 444
- Call Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000
- Report online harm to:
 - eSafety Commissioner <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>
 - ACCCE <https://www.accce.gov.au/report>

Support Services

If you're a young person

- Kids Helpline (for children and young people aged between 5–25) on 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
- Bravehearts (support for child sexual abuse survivors) on 1800 272 831 <https://bravehearts.org.au>

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- 13YARN on 13 92 76 www.13yarn.org.au

If you're a parent/caregiver/educator

- Blue Knot Foundation on 1300 657 380 <https://blueknot.org.au/>
- Survivors & Mates Support Network (SAMSN) on 1800 472 676 <https://www.samsn.org.au/>
- 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 <https://1800respect.org.au/>
- Parent helplines and hotlines (state by state) <https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/services-support/about-services-support/helplines>

Further Resource Recommendations

- Daniel Morcombe Foundation: Keeping Kids Safe resources <https://danielmorcombe.com.au/keeping-kids-safe-resources/>
- E-Safety Commissioner: Resources for young people <https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people>
- Kids Helpline: Resources for 13 – 17 year olds <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens>