

In the Wake of Trauma:

Tips for College Students



Helpful Resources

National Mental Health Information Center
Toll-Free: 1-800-789-2647 (English and Español)
TDD: 1-866-889-2647
Web Site: www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
Toll-Free: 1-800-729-6686 (English and Español)
TDD: 1-800-487-4889
Web Site: www.ncadi.samhsa.gov

Treatment Locators

Mental Health Services Locator
Toll-Free: 1-800-789-2647 (English and Español)
TDD: 1-866-889-2647
Web Site: www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator

Toll-Free: 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (24/7 English and Español)
TDD: 1-800-487-4889
Web Site: www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Hotlines

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Toll-Free: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
TTY: 1-800-799-4TTY (4889)
Web Site: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Office for Victims of Crime
Toll-Free: 1-800-851-3420
TTY: 1-877-712-9279
Web Site: www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ovcres/welcome.html

Note: Inclusion of a resource in this fact sheet does not imply endorsement by the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- Whether or not you were directly affected by a traumatic event, it is normal to feel anxious about your own safety, to picture the event in your own mind, and to wonder how you would react in an emergency.
- People react in different ways to trauma. Some may become irritable or depressed; others lose sleep or have nightmares; and others may deny their feelings or simply “blank out” the troubling event. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to feel after experiencing trauma.
- While it may feel better to pretend the event did not happen, in the long run, it is best to be honest about your feelings and to allow yourself to acknowledge the sense of loss and uncertainty.
- It is important to realize that, while things may seem off balance for a while, your life will return to normal.
- It is important to talk with someone about your sorrow, anger, and other emotions, even though it may be difficult to get started.
- You may feel most comfortable talking about your feelings with a professor, counselor, or church leader. The important thing is to share your feelings with someone you trust. If you don't have someone to confide in, call 1-800-273-TALK for someone who will listen.
- It is common to be angry at people who have caused great pain. This desire comes from our outrage for the innocent victims. We must understand, though, that it is futile to respond with more violence. Nothing good is accomplished by hateful language or actions.
- While you will always remember the event, the painful feelings will decrease over time, and you will come to understand that, in learning to cope with tragedy, you have become stronger, more adaptable, and more self-reliant.

Tips for Coping

Talk about it. Talking with friends, classmates, professors, and family members will help you realize that you are not alone in your feelings.

Limit media viewing. Take breaks from watching news coverage of the event.

Take care of yourself. Taking good physical care of yourself with rest, exercise, and healthy eating will help your body to deal with stress. Do activities that you enjoy and find relaxing.

Avoid excess. Avoid using alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products as a way of dealing with stress.

Resume routines. Getting back to your daily routines in life can be a good method for regaining a sense of control.

Get involved. Engaging in positive activities like group discussions and candlelight vigils can help promote comfort and healing.