

FIRST RESPONDER LIFE ADVISOR

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LifeAdvisorEAP.com



“ Starting to Heal Following National Tragedies ”

Recent shootings in Boulder, Colorado, Atlanta, Georgia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania have again forced the nation to confront its gun violence and mental health crisis. No matter how close, frequent, or horrific, these events never fail to send shock waves of fear and concern every time. Most recent shootings have been linked to hate crimes and racial discrimination which can bring additional complicated reactions. Everyone responds in their own unique way and most often, carry a combination of complex and unpleasant feelings into the workplace. There are ways to channel feelings and process the experiences in a way that's helpful for individuals and for the team.

Tragic events can cause feelings of disillusionment, being out of touch with reality and feeling lost. Talking can help to serve as a reality check; that the unbelievable events that occurred, are also unbelievable to others, and that the loss of equilibrium is a shared experience. Unhealthy preoccupation, spreading of rumors and speculation should be kept in check. Life Advisor EAP consultants are always available to link employees with additional support.

Hopelessness, sadness and despair are also common reactions to gun violence and racial inequality. These feelings can sometimes be alleviated by doing something productive to help others. Healthy examples include various GoFundMe pages set up to assist survivors, accommodate funeral expenses and support their families. Others are donating blood, educating themselves on important issues or volunteering with organizations set up to help those impacted by the tragedy. People may be inspired to join a cause or call Congress. Sometimes a business can help funnel independent efforts into a coordinated offering.

Feeling overwhelmed can fester and lead to more emotional complications. To prevent becoming overwhelmed it's important to take a break from the continuous coverage and commentary. Given the proliferation of screens in our lives, it can be hard to avoid, but turning off the TV and keeping the phone out of sight can be small, helpful steps. Or have planned exposure; for example, allow 10 minutes at lunch time for updates, and 10 minutes after dinner. This way, wallowing and ruminating, which can quickly become unhealthy, can be avoided or at least minimized.

People who have suffered a previous trauma may have old, unpleasant feelings suddenly return when processing recent events. This is commonly being referred to as being "triggered". If this should happen, it doesn't necessarily mean the person lost any progress made in coping and adapting with the original tragedy. In fact, feeling triggered and having old feelings resurface is common and should be expected from time to time. In situations where someone may become overwhelmed, it may be helpful for a brief tune-up with a mental health professional, easily accessed through the Life Advisor EAP. It's hard to not be affected by multiple, mass crimes in seemingly safe places. Even people who don't report feeling impacted will be wise to take care of themselves as a healthy preemptive way to maintain a sense of balance. This includes ensuring adequate, quality sleep above all else. Proper nutrition, exercise, and healthy, non-anxiety producing socialization is also critically important in a self-care regiment.

Should anyone feel distressed, unable to focus or go about your daily activities, call your Life Advisor Consultant now to help move through this challenging time.

We're here to help. Call your Life Advisor EAP at 800.448.8326
LifeAdvisorEAP.com