

Recognizing and Coping with Trauma After a Community Tragedy

Whether you've shopped or dined in Olde Town, taken your children to the library or school, or even work in the area, it might be difficult for you to make sense of this event and feel safe in a place that once brought you comfort and joy.

After an event like this, 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. In the days and months to follow, it's important to take care of yourself and recognize that these are all normal reactions in times of trauma and the way you process grief is valid.

Common Reactions to Traumatic Situations

After a community tragedy, it's okay to experience...

- Feeling emotionally “numb”, withdrawn, disconnected or different from others
- Recurring thoughts or nightmares about the event
- Trouble sleeping or changes in appetite
- Being on edge, easily started, or overly alert
- Feeling depressed, sad and having low energy
- Experiencing memory problems
- Feeling “scattered” and unable to focus
- Feeling guilty about having survived
- Feeling irritable, easily agitated, or angry and resentful
- Spontaneously crying, feeling a sense of despair and hopelessness

HEALTHY COPING STRATEGIES



Acknowledge the event - take the time to recognize that what you have been through was stressful and traumatic.



Talk with someone - reach out to a trusted friend, family member, or faith leader and talk about how you are doing.



Move your body - try deep breathing, gentle stretching, and walking to relieve stress.



Take care of yourself - taking good physical care of yourself with rest, exercise, and healthy eating will help your body cope.



Limit media viewing - take breaks from watching news coverage of the event or reading articles about the event online or following social media posts related to the tragedy.



Avoid substance use - avoid using alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products as a way of dealing with stress.



Write about it - putting your thoughts onto paper with a journal or a diary can help you process the event.

Your Community is Here for You

Victims advocates, along with Jefferson Center and other community partners are supporting walk-ins at the Arvada Family Assistance Center.

The Arvada Emergency Assistance Center
Shrine of Saint Anne School
7320 Grant Place Arvada, CO 80002
Hours: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Jefferson Center's doors are open for anyone in need of support. Whether you are experiencing a crisis, are seeking professional help, or if you just want someone to talk to, please reach out. **Call us at 303-425-0300 or walk-in to the Crisis and Recovery Center located at 4643 Wadsworth Blvd, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033.**

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 resilient.