



SELF-CARE AFTER TRAUMATIC EVENT

Maintaining awareness of and sensitivity to potential primary and secondary trauma reactions, including compassion fatigue, is critical at this time. As you may know, these reactions can include irritability, sadness, tearfulness, anxiety, hypervigilance, hopelessness, and sleep disturbance.

It is important to remember that these and other grief reactions are normal, appropriate, and healthy to this type of tragedy. Ignoring and suppressing emotional reactions can contribute to delayed and worsened trauma reactions.

Self-care and strong social support is essential to restoring balance. Some self-care strategies include:

- Practice breathing exercises
- Minimize over exposure to media
- Take regular breaks
- Eat healthy food and all meals
- Get adequate amounts of sleep
- Engage in physical exercise
- Continue participating in recreational activities
- Participate in meaningful cultural activities, including spiritual communities

Sharing reactions, thoughts, and emotions can be helpful for some people, but others may not want to share, especially in a group setting. Give people permission to not share if they do not wish, as this can re-trigger trauma reactions. Please encourage people to be sensitive to one another and speak in private, as not everyone will want to hear these conversations.

Part of this process also includes encouraging staff to focus on personal experiences and established facts. Minimizing rumors will help prevent escalating fear and trauma reactions.

The following resources are available to assist anyone who needs additional support:

Managing Stress: At this link you can find a document with tips on how to manage stress after a traumatic event: <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA13-4776/SMA13-4776.pdf>

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline: The SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline is available to help and support for ANY distress that you or someone you care about may be feeling related to ANY disaster, including violence. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. Available 24/7. Spanish speakers text Hablanos to 66746.

DBH Access Unit: DBH's Access Unit provides connection to behavioral health crisis services to all of San Bernardino County as well as member services and access to behavioral health services for all beneficiaries of San Bernardino County Medi-Cal. Available 24/7. Call (888) 743-1478 or (909) 386-8256.

Coping After Terrorism for Survivors: This Department of Justice handbook has information to help individuals understand reactions to an act of terrorism or mass violence: https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/coping_terrorism.pdf/view