

Mental Health Resources for Coping with Traumatic Events

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) offers tips and other mental health resources on how to minimize possible mental and emotional effects of trauma caused by a tragedy like this.

The effects of traumas and disasters can have tremendous psychological impacts on those who are affected directly and indirectly. Affected individuals may have various stress reactions that present psychological, as well as physical, symptoms. However, there are steps that individuals can take for themselves and their families to mitigate and lessen the psychosomatic impacts felt by the community at large and those involved in the event.

After an event has passed, the APA recommends following these steps to begin coping with the possible devastation and stress that follows such a tragedy:

1. Keep informed about new information and developments, but avoid overexposure to news rebroadcasts of the events. Be sure to use credible information sources to avoid speculation and rumors.
2. Learn what local resources are available to aid those affected by the tragedy and be prepared to share this information.
3. If you feel anxious, angry or depressed, you are not alone. Talk to friends, family or colleagues who likely are experiencing the same feelings.
4. If you have contact with children, keep open dialogues with them regarding their fears of danger and the traumatic event. Let them know that in time, the tragedy will pass. Don't minimize the danger, but talk about your ability to cope with tragedy and get through the ordeal.
5. Feelings of anxiety and depression following a traumatic event are natural. If these symptoms continue, even after order has been restored, or if these feelings begin to overwhelm you, seek the advice of a psychiatric physician in your local community.

For more information on coping with mental illnesses, visit the APA's patient / public education website:
www.psychiatry.org/mental-health