



Your Leading Mental Health Resource

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What are common reactions to traumatic events?

- Disbelief and shock
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Disorientation, apathy and emotional numbing
- Irritability and anger
- Sadness and depression
- Difficulty making decisions
- Headaches and stomach problems
- Difficulty sleeping

Tips for coping with tragic events

Helping Children Deal With Tragic Events

- Be honest and open, but keep information age-appropriate
- Encourage children to express their feelings through talking, drawing or playing
- Try to maintain your daily routines
- Monitor children's and adolescents media viewing

Coping With Tragedy: Tips for College Students

- Speak with friends, classmates and professors about how you are feeling
- Take care of yourself: avoid excessive drinking and risk-taking activities
- Get involved with campus activities planned in response to the tragic event

Coping With Tragedy: Tips for Adults

- Talk about your feelings to help relieve stress
- Get plenty of rest and exercise - remember to eat well
- Spend time with your family
- As soon as it feels comfortable, go back to your usual routine
- Do things that you find relaxing and soothing
- Do something positive that will help you gain a greater sense of control (volunteer, give blood, make a donation)

Coping With Tragedy: Tips for Older Adults

- Talk about the experience and how you are feeling
- Communicate with loved ones and be around others
- Take care of yourself physically
- Write about significant experiences in your life and how they have affected you

Helping Your Workforce Cope and Return to Work

- Speak to your entire organization regularly
- Educate your supervisors and managers and ensure that they, and you, follow the advice given to employees
- Provide educational resources
- Consider bringing a professional counselor on-site
- Hold a memorial service
- Organize community action (organize community volunteer days or hold a blood drive)

Coping With Tragedy: Tips for Primary Care Physicians

- Talk to your patients about the tragedies
- Advise eating healthy, getting plenty of rest and exercise
- Encourage patients to spend time with their family and friends
- Encourage participation in relaxing and soothing activities

Coping With Loss – Bereavement and Grief

Living With Grief

- Seek out caring people – join a support group
- Postpone major life changes – give yourself time to adjust to your loss
- It can take months or even years to absorb a major loss
- Seek outside help when necessary

Helping Others Grieve

- Share the sorrow
- Don't offer false comfort
- Offer practical help
- Encourage professional help when necessary

For supportive listening services, call the Montgomery County Hotline at (301) 738-2255.

For immediate response to crisis situations, call the Montgomery County Crisis Center at (240) 777-4000.

For general information or related fact sheets, call the Mental Health Association at (301) 424-0656 or visit www.mhamc.org.