

Advice for workers who must continue to function following an incident:

- ◆ Try to pace yourself and pace your decisions. Consider courses of action (i.e., avoid snap decisions that may have to be changed).
- ◆ Take breaks when possible and relax ways that helped in the past. Exercise helps.
- ◆ Rest and relax off of your feet when there are opportunities.
- ◆ Identify a trusted co-worker to bounce ideas off and serve as a buddy (i.e., someone to look after you).
- ◆ If you must continue to work immediately after workplace violence limiting alcohol and tobacco use, excessive “junk” food, and unnecessary driving are particularly important.
- ◆ Do not overwork. Trust others to help and get the job done.

References:

- Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (2013). *Recovery in the Aftermath of Workplace Violence: Guidance for Workers*. Retrieved from www.usuhs.mil/scts/.
- American Psychological Association (2014). *Managing Your Distress in the Aftermath of a Shooting*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/mass-shooting.aspx>.

Aftermath of Active Shooter



INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY
RECOVERY



Possible Psychological Impact

Short-term recovery, make sure that you:

- ◆ Talk to your family and friends about emotions and feelings toward the incident
- ◆ Limit your use of alcohol, tobacco, and “junk food”. Drink water
- ◆ Limit unnecessary driving for the first 6 weeks
- ◆ Sleep and rest. Exercise can also help reduce distress
- ◆ Return to normal routines as soon as possible

Common responses to harmful events:

- ◆ Often these are involuntary and spontaneous responses. It’s hardwired in the brain.
- ◆ People get very angry, may overreact, and try to fight the problem. They may have aggressive behaviors towards others.
- ◆ Sometimes people may withdraw from social interaction They would try to get out of the situation as soon as possible.
- ◆ People may pass out, freeze or mentally remove themselves from their bodies, and don’t feel the pain of the attack, and sometimes have no memory of it afterwards.
- ◆ These reactions are common.

Possible Long-term Consequences:

- ◆ Persistent sadness, explosive anger
- ◆ Suicidal thoughts
- ◆ Forgetting traumatic events or reliving them
- ◆ Feeling detached from one’s mind or body
- ◆ Feelings of helplessness, shame, guilt and stigma
- ◆ One may feel that they are different than other people
- ◆ Social isolation, distrust in others
- ◆ Alcohol/substances abuse to avoid and/or numb associated feelings/thoughts
- ◆ Self-mutilating and/or other types of self-injurious behaviors

Helpful Tips

Talk about it:

Ask for support from people who care about you and who will listen to your concerns. Receiving support and care can be comforting and reassuring.

Strive for balance:

When a tragedy occurs, it’s easy to become overwhelmed, negative, or pessimistic. Balance those feelings by reminding yourself of people and events which are meaningful and comforting, even encouraging.

Turn it off and take a break:

You may want to keep informed, but try to limit the amount of news you take in from the internet, television, newspapers or magazines. While getting the news informs you, being overexposed to it can increase your stress. Do something that will lift your spirits.

Honor your feelings:

Remember that it is common to have many emotions after a traumatic incident. Some stress reactions feel similar to the effects of a physical injury. For example, you may feel exhausted, sore, or off balance.

Take care of yourself:

Practice healthy behaviors to enhance your ability to cope with excessive stress. Eat well-balanced meals, get plenty of rest, and build physical activity into your day. Avoid alcohol and drugs because they can suppress your feelings rather than help you to manage and lessen them. If you are having trouble sleeping, try some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga.

Help others or do something productive:

Locate resources in your community through which you can help people who have been affected by this incident or have other needs. Helping someone else often has the benefit of making you feel better as well.

If you have recently lost friends or family in this or other tragedies:

Remember that grief is a long process. Give yourself time to experience your feelings and to recover. Everyone will recover in their own way. Dealing with the shock and trauma of such an event will take time. It is typical to expect many ups and downs, including “survivor guilt” — feeling bad that you escaped the tragedy while others did not.

