

Reactions to the Campus Shootings

As we reflect upon the most recent campus shootings, it may be helpful to keep a few things in mind regarding how people often manage distressing events. It is very important to recognize that people deal with situations differently and there is no one “right way.” The following are common characteristics of the process people typically experience.

Common Reactions to Distressing Events

- Numbness
- Low energy
- Feeling sad or angry
- Fears, uncertainties, apprehension
- Recurrent thoughts about the event
- Irritability, unhappiness
- Problems with concentration or memory

When do Normal Post-Crisis Reactions Become Serious Enough to Seek Assistance?

- Increased isolation or withdrawal from others
- Significant increase in the use of alcohol or other drugs
- Outbursts of anger or crying
- Loss of interest in work/school or previously enjoyed activities
- Inability to discuss your feelings about what happened

Tips for Coping and Self-Care

- Find time to reflect on what this event means to you.
- Find a personally meaningful way of acknowledge this event. For some this may be attending a ceremony or service, making a donation to a charity, or saying a private prayer.
- Avoid overexposure to media coverage. Sometimes the saturation of media coverage can be a stress in itself. Know your limits and don't overdo.
- Spend times with friends and/or family. Stay connected to people who care and let people know how important they are to you.
- Communicate your thoughts and feelings.
- If this event brings up recollections of earlier losses, traumatic events or personal adversity it might be helpful to talk with a professional. The University Counseling Center welcomes Millersville students who would like to talk about this or other personal issues. Appointments are available by calling 871-3122. If you are not a Millersville student, mental health referrals are available by calling 290-5887.