

# Recovery from a Violent Incident

Hearing about a violent incident is often disturbing, especially when it occurs at a place where you spend time or affects people you know. Common reactions include:

- Feeling vulnerable and insecure. Violent incidents may affect your sense of personal safety and security. You may find yourself worrying more about family members when they are not with you.
- Fear of the unknown. Violence is a reminder that you can't control the behavior of others. You may feel uncomfortable in public places or in settings that remind you of the event. You may also worry about family members more.
- Range of thoughts and emotions. You may feel a wide range of emotions, including sadness, anger, guilt, frustration, and dread. Understand that some people may need to talk about the event, while others may want to avoid discussing it at all.
- Avoiding feelings. People who are coping with immediate stress may sometimes deny their feelings (a useful short-term strategy). Over time, emotions often emerge in other ways, such as physical symptoms, hyperactivity, or working too much.
- Relating to the experience of victims. You may find that you are more affected by an incident if you or someone you know is directly impacted, or if you identify in some way with a person who was injured.
- Delayed reactions. If you have suffered trauma in the past, you may reexperience your emotional responses from that event.

If you or someone you know is struggling with news of a violent incident, these steps may help:

- Be accepting. Don't judge emotional reactions or strong feelings as right or wrong. News of violence can trigger thoughts and feelings, and everyone will react differently.
- Connect with others. Talking with friends and family is often comforting. When others come to you, listen to their concerns and assure them of your care and your commitment to safety (this is especially important for children).
- Limit media exposure. Take breaks from news and media before it is "too much" to handle. Turn off social media, news, radio, and TV. Take a walk or engage in a relaxing activity instead.
- Be safe. Review safety protocols. Talking about practical safety tips may help you and those around you to regain a sense of control.

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