



Collectively Healing in the Aftermath of Traumatic Events

The tragic death of a student on campus this week has been a shocking, and deeply disturbing experience for our community. This event coupled with the ongoing traumatic events in the world can all become overwhelming. These events are taxing to our wellbeing and can trigger so many complex emotions. Some may be experiencing changes with energy, inability to focus, feeling numb, detached, and empty, or be unable to accept what has happened. Depending on how close you were to the event, your symptoms may be more intense than others. Please know that all of what you feel is NORMAL and the results of experiencing a traumatic event.

In the days to come, please allow yourself to feel and express your emotions. You may be struggling with the thoughts that it is better to hold yourself together alone, continue normal routines and avoid experiencing your emotions! This is not healthy and will only delay healing and deepen your pain. If are struggling to cope, it's important to seek help and make the healing changes that will allow you in this time of distress.

Facing the trauma that we experience as a community can be intense; but if we can learn to ask for help, we also learn to understand our resilience and healing power as a community. The team at the faculty and assistance program is here to support you if you are struggling to cope. We are offering individual and organizational support as needed. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us at (301) 314-8014 or (301) 317-8099 to arrange a consultation for personal or organizational needs.

Here are a few practical tips to help you as you heal.

- 1) **Ask for help**- As stated above, death is painful and leaves an emotional impact that is sometimes indescribable. Stay honest about what you are feeling and or experiencing and make use of the campus community. Learn about all the resources on campus available for you and ask for help.
- 2) **Take care of yourself**- Be mindful of your body. Eat, Sleep, Rest and Hydrate. As simple as this sounds, it is imperative that we remember to eat and care for ourselves with basic care necessities.
- 3) **Practice self-compassion**- No harsh critical judgments! You matter and your feelings are valid. Speak to yourself as you would speak to a friend having a hard time. Negative self-talk with a critical analysis of yourself in this experience will not aid in fostering a sense of hope.
- 4) **Take Breaks**- Honor yourself with the breaks needed to simply breathe and re-group.
- 5) **Connect with your community**- Stay honest about what you feel and connect in the community to create safe checks ins and healing spaces!

Remember,

We are all in this together! One day, one step, one tear at a time, WE WILL HEAL!

In Wellness,


Dr. Tonya C. Phillips

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