

## When to Seek Help?

### You Cannot Move On

If your feelings of grief persist or if you feel unable to function or perform basic activities of daily living, it is important that you seek professional help.

### Feeling Depressed

Some people after losing a loved one may become depressed, which is more than feeling of grief. Depression is an illness that can take over your life if remained untreated. Seek help if you:

- Feel persistently sad, anxious, or worthless
- Feel hopeless and lost interest in what you used to enjoy
- Have low energy and feel persistently tired
- Have changes in sleep and appetite
- Have trouble concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Have recurring aches and pains which don't respond to treatment
- Have thoughts of death or suicide, or attempt suicide

### Experiencing lasting post-traumatic stress (PTSD)

Reactions that worsen, last longer than a month, or interfere with daily functioning may indicate the development of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD.

## Where to find help?

If you feel overwhelmed or are concerned about someone else, you can find help by calling 1-800 LIFENET

*LifeNet is a free, confidential helpline for New York City residents, available 24/7, with trained staff ready to take your call.*

**1-800-LIFENET**

**1-800-543-3638 (English)**

**1-877-Ayudese**

**1-877-298-3373 (Spanish)**

**1-877-990-8585 (Chinese)**

**1-212-982-5284 (TTY)**



*If your symptoms become so severe that you need help urgently, or if you are thinking about harming yourself or someone else, call 911.*



## COPING WITH MASS SHOOTING

Witnessing a mass shooting or losing a loved one in such tragic way is a traumatic experience.

It shatters our sense of safety and we struggle to understand what happened and why.

Recovering will take some time and it can be difficult

Family and friends can help us cope and go on living our daily life. For most this will be enough to get through, while others may experience difficulties and need addition support.

*This leaflet aims to help you heal and cope.*

## In the aftermath

It is natural to experience a variety of emotions such as shock, disbelief, sorrow, numbness, fear, anger, frustration and grief. Feeling exhausted, having trouble with sleeping, eating, concentrating, or remembering even simple things are also common.

### Grief

Grief is a normal response to losing someone important.

It can be intense and initially you may feel as if in a shock, empty and numb; and may experience physical reactions such as trembling, nausea, and weakness.

Strange dreams and nightmares, behaving absent-mindedly, not wanting to return to usual activities, are also common. Feeling angry and guilty, thinking about what could have, or should have been done differently, are also frequent. These reactions are normal, and usually pass with time and support.

Grieving will last as long as the person accepts and learns to live with the loss. Some people grieve for months while others for years.

Grieving occurs in four steps:

- Accepting the loss
- Working through the physical and emotional pain of grief
- Adjusting to living in a world without the person lost
- Moving on with life

*Grieving is done only when all four steps are completed.*

## PTSD

Mass shooting is a traumatic event, and post-traumatic stress reactions; re-experiencing, avoidance, and hyper-arousal; especially in the early aftermath are common. The reactions are often distressing, but natural, and help us process the experience and recover.

However, severe, worsening and long-reactions may indicate the development of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD, a more serious condition.

### RE-EXPERIENCING: Reliving what happened

Having flashbacks and nightmares and thinking about it even when don't want to. Sights, smells, and sounds unexpectedly remind you of the event.

### AVOIDANCE: Staying away from reminders

Not wanting to talk about what happened, and wanting to stay away from reminders of what happened, e.g. places and people. Avoiding activities and company of people (friends and family) you used to enjoy. Feeling emotionally "dead" and hopeless about the future

### Hyper-arousal: Being on your guard even when safe

Worrying a lot/believing that something else bad will happen. Startling easily, e.g. jumping at sudden noises, and feeling irritable and having angry outburst.



### Online resources:

GriefNe.: <http://www.griefnet.org/>

Growth House, Inc. <http://www.growthhouse.org>

Transformations <http://www.transformations.com>

## Coping with the Death of a Loved One

**Talk about your loss.** You may find it comforting and feel less alone. Use social media, but only to supplement face-to-face interactions.

**Accept your feelings** and recover at your own pace, in your own way.

**Learn about grief** and remember it can be a long process with many ups and downs.

**Take care of yourself.** Try to stick to routines, eat well, exercise and get enough rest. Avoid alcohol and drugs. They may bring temporary relief but can cause problems later on.

**Limit your exposure** to the news about the tragedy. Turn off the TV, computer, and put down the papers.

**Take a break.** Do something that will lift your spirits.

**Strive for a balance.** Remind yourself of good and meaningful things in life and the world.

**Be part of the community.** It can offer you a network of support. Help others affected by the tragedy.

**Ask for help** if f you feel stuck or overwhelmed.