

Tragic events like the shooting on 1/8/11 are disorienting, confusing, and overwhelming. It is normal to experience many different feelings, which often come and go like waves. It is also normal to experience no feelings at all or mostly anger. Everyone reacts to stress differently. At this difficult time, it is especially important to trust yourself and be mindful that you possess a lifetime of experiences in coping with hardship.

Questions or concerns you may have

I am having nightmares and painful images of the event that scare me. What does this mean?

- This is the mind's natural way to process what you have gone through. One strategy for coping with these may be to accept what you are experiencing (try not to push it away) and acknowledge how you are feeling. The image will gradually dissolve, and the frequency with which you experience these images will lessen over time.

I can't sleep, and I don't really feel like eating.

- Stress impacts our mind as well as our body. Sometimes, it can be harder to cope with stress when we are tired and hungry. If meals are hard, smoothies and other snacks that may be easier. Consider talking to your provider about treatments for insomnia.

I don't want to go to the grocery store, turn on the TV, or talk to people about what happened.

- At this stage, this response is normal and logical – these things are painful reminders. Also, watching too much TV or repeating your story too many times can be unhelpful.
- After awhile, avoiding activities like these may constrict your lifestyle. At a slow and moderate pace, consider getting back to your daily routine. Doing activities like these will help you feel more in control about ways you are handling the stress over time.

Why did this happen?

- Events like the shooting on 1/8/11 disrupt our sense of safety in the world. To feel better, it is tempting to ask a lot of questions about why this happened. The world contains both danger and safety. That public rally was unsafe but all public rallies are not unsafe.
- It also tempting to wonder about alternatives: if ____ had happened instead, then maybe the outcome could have been different? There is no way to know that a change in behaviors (or even community policy) would have lead to a better outcome. *Bad things can happen to good people and for no logical reason.*

Because I went through this, will I have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

- Most people heal naturally after a stressful event. A number of things have been found to be helpful in helping the healing process, like:
 - Remembering that friends, family, community (neighbors, churches, and other organizations), and providers are there for you. Consider asking them to support you in going at your own pace. If you begin to feel isolated, consider reaching-out to others.
 - *Allowing Not Forcing.* Allow yourself to feel and express emotions that arise or don't arise. Allow yourself time to take breaks and engage in positive and uplifting activities, like hobbies, exercise, watching a comedy, and spiritual practice. Allow yourself permission to ask for help.

Tucson community members are available to provide support. The Tucson Tragedy Support Line, is available 24 hours a day until further notice at 520-284-3517.