

# FIRST RESPONDER



## Life Advisor EAP<sup>®</sup>

The mass shooting last week in Gilroy, CA, and this weekend in El Paso, TX, and Dayton, OH, have once again shocked the nation to a state of alarm. Everyone responds in their own unique way and most often, carry a myriad of complex and unpleasant feelings into the workplace. There are ways to channel feelings and process the experiences in a way that's helpful for individuals and for the team.

### Starting to Heal Following National Tragedies



Tragic events can cause feelings of disillusionment, a sense of unreality and feeling lost. Talking can help to serve as a reality check; that the unbelievable events are also unbelievable to others, as well and the loss of equilibrium is a shared experience. Unhealthy preoccupation, spreading of rumors and speculation should be kept in check. Life Advisor EAP consultants are always available to link employees with additional support.



Hopelessness, sadness and despair are also common reactions to gun violence. These feelings can sometimes be alleviated by doing something productive to help others. An excellent example of this idea in action happened when the call for blood donations in the El Paso area following the mass shooting resulted in an immediate flood of volunteers. People may be inspired to join a cause, call Congress, donate or volunteer. Sometimes a business can help funnel independent efforts into a coordinated offering.



Feeling overwhelmed can fester and lead to more emotional complications. To prevent becoming overwhelmed it's important to take a break from the continuous coverage and commentary. Given the proliferation of screens in our lives, it can be hard to avoid, but turning off the TV and keeping the phone out of sight can be small, helpful steps. Or have planned exposure; for example, allow 10 minutes at lunch time for updates, and 10 minutes after dinner. This way, wallowing and ruminating, which can quickly become unhealthy, can be avoided or at least minimized.



People who have suffered a previous trauma may have old, unpleasant feelings suddenly return when processing recent events. This is commonly being referred to as being "triggered". If this should happen, it doesn't necessarily mean the person lost any progress made in coping and adapting with the original tragedy. In fact, feeling triggered and having old feelings resurface is common and should be expected from time to time. In situations where someone may become overwhelmed, it may be helpful for a brief tune-up with a mental health professional, easily accessed through the Life Advisor EAP.



It's hard to not be affected by multiple, mass crimes in seemingly safe places. Even people who don't report feeling impacted will be wise to take care of themselves as a healthy preemptive way to maintain a sense of balance. This includes ensuring adequate, quality sleep above all else. Proper nutrition, exercise, and healthy, non-anxiety producing socialization is also critically important in a self-care regiment.

Should anyone feel unable to function or take care of basic daily-living activities, call your Life Advisor Consultant now to help move through this challenging time.