

PROVIDING SUPPORT WHEN TRAUMATIC EVENTS HAPPEN

There is value in providing a safe, confidential space for someone to share the truth about what they are experiencing. Research shows that listening to bear witness to another's experience helps them feel seen, heard, and understood, and has a powerfully positive impact.

Tips to Listen and Reflect with Presence and Compassion:

- Pause to take a deep breath and connect with your intention to provide a supportive space.
 - Focus on what is within your control; your role is to listen to another's experience, not to take on their pain.
 - Listen with compassion and nonjudgement, reflect on their strengths and resources, normalize their feelings and experiences, and advise them of available support.
- Release yourself from the pressure of coming up with something perfect to say.

Following a Traumatic or Adverse Event	
Common Reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion, disorientation, worry, overwhelm, fear, intrusive thoughts and images, heightened alert, self-blame • Shock, sorrow, grief, fear, anger, numbness, irritability, guilt, shame • Extreme withdrawal, interpersonal conflict, feeling weary and exhausted • Fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, stomach upset, increased heart rate, exaggerated startle response • Difficulty sleeping, eating, focusing
Helpful Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving yourself permission to feel whatever you feel • Talking to another person/spending time with others • Focusing on something practical that you can do right now • Engaging in activities that help you ground in your body and in the present moment • Employing relaxation methods • Prioritizing sleep, remembering to hydrate, and eating nourishing foods • Maintaining as normal of a schedule as you are able • Grounding exercises (Soothe Overwhelm) • Seeking counseling (contact FEAP)

<p>Promoting Growth after Trauma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus first on re-establishing a sense of physical, psychological, and emotional safety. • Allow yourself to include your full range of emotional responses as they arise. Try to name what you feel (outraged, scared, bewildered, loving) and take a breath. Connect with offered supports and/or trusted others to process feelings and experiences. • Produce a narrative authentic to you and your experience about the trauma and life afterward to help with acceptance of what has occurred. • Act in ways that benefit or simply express gratitude and show compassion to others. • Reconnect with your values and make choices that are aligned with what matters to you the most. • Look for personal and shared missions that energize you and help you find meaning.
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Responses that Can Lead to Greater Suffering:

Please reach out if you experience any of the following

- Using alcohol or drugs to cope
- Working too much
- Extreme avoidance of thinking or talking about the traumatic event(s)/experience(s)
- Violence or conflict
- Not talking care of yourself

Resources for Support:

- [FEAP](#) (434-243-2643)
- [Population Health](#)
- [UVA Maxine Platzner Lynn Women's Center](#)
- [Compassionate Care Initiative](#)
- [Mary D Ainsworth Psychological Clinic](#)
- [UVA Mental Health Support](#)
- [Virginia Community Response Network](#)
- [Region Ten Crisis Support Services](#)

Resources for UVA Students

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) (434-243-5150)
- [TimelyCare](#) (Student Health)