

# c&fs EAP

## Employee Assistance Program

### Guidelines for teachers in the aftermath of mass violence

#### **Recognize normal responses in the aftermath of mass violence, and assume that different students will react differently**

- Students may feel sad, scared, or numb; they may also appear tired or irritable from sleep disruption
- Students may experience physical symptoms like headaches, stomach aches, or body aches
- Younger students may seek more attention; older students may not reveal their distress or may opt to share it on social media
- Students may have trouble focusing, participating, or getting work done on time
- Students may withdraw or become preoccupied with worry or guilt

#### **Explain and encourage self-care and healthy coping strategies; be flexible and understanding**

- ⇒ Encourage students to engage in positive activities, including hobbies or volunteering for relief efforts
- ⇒ Return to normal classroom activities, rules, expectations
- ⇒ Be flexible and patient: allow for breaks as needed; modify expectations to afford time for processing and healing; avoid punishment
- ⇒ Make sure students are aware of how to access supports within the school and the larger community
- ⇒ Educate students about different trauma responses
- ⇒ Encourage students to take good care of themselves; encourage relaxation through breathing, stretching, or other exercise
- ⇒ Make sure to refer students for professional help if you have concerns about them hurting themselves or others

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This information was compiled and modified from the following sources:

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress ; National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Sulaski, C. (Reviewed 2019). Individual's reactions to traumatic events. Raleigh, NC: Workplace Options.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2014, November). Tips for survivors: Coping with grief after community violence (Pub. No. SMA-14-4888). Retrieved August 22, 2019, from <https://store.samhsa.gov>

U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (1993, December). Helping an employee recover from an assault (Chapter 5). In *A Manager's Handbook: Handling Traumatic Events (OWR-15)*. Retrieved January 11, 2019, from <https://www.opm.gov>

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