

LifeAdviser Special Edition

A Balanced Living Special Edition Newsletter

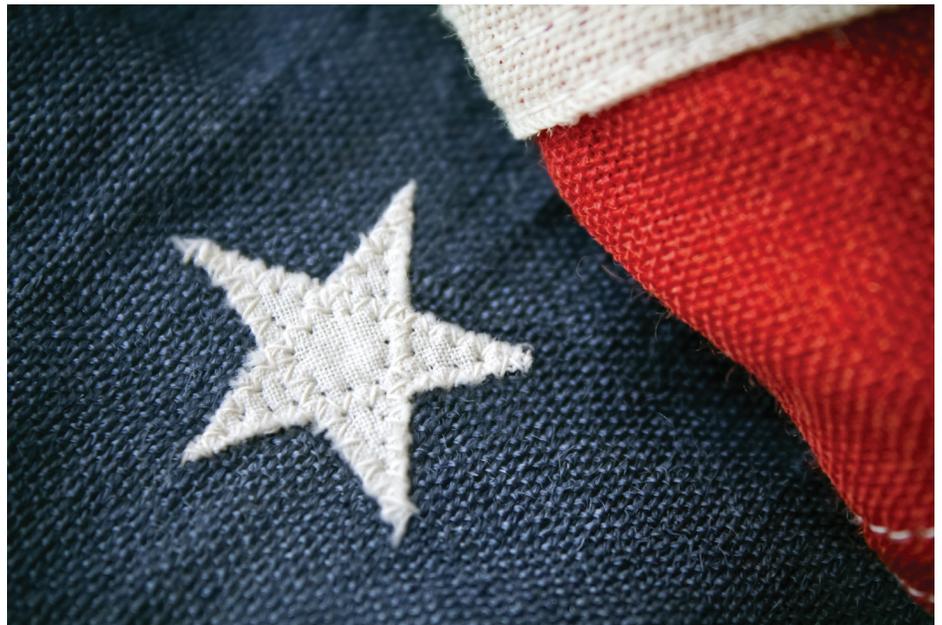
CONCERN has prepared this special edition newsletter following another tragic week in America. We are devoted to helping you and your family members understand the impact of racial tension and violence in our culture on your emotional well-being and providing tips on ways to cope. In today's always-on society, breaking news is an immediate, in-your-face experience. The words and images are visceral, emotional and stressful – and while it may not affect you directly, this violence can undermine your sense of safety and security.

This article is adapted from the American Psychological Association (APA) and focuses on managing your distress in the aftermath of inexplicable violence.

Professional Help is Available

If you are an employee or eligible dependent of an organization contracted with CONCERN: EAP and need additional assistance for emotional support and finding local resources, you can request counseling and work/life services by calling **800.344.4222** answered live 24/7 or visit www.concern-eap.com to request services via a confidential, secure online form.

Another tragic week in America Managing Your Distress in Times of Upheaval



Facing stress and uncertainty

Senseless acts of violence affect all of us. Last week's violence and recent tragic events have left many people with a justifiable sense of helplessness, uncertainty, and fear about rising racial and ideological tension and upheaval in our country. You may be struggling to understand it yet there may never be satisfactory answers to your questions.

We do know, though, that it is typical for people to experience a variety of emotions following traumatic and violent events. These feelings can include shock, sorrow, numbness, fear, anger, disillusionment, grief and others. You may find that you have trouble sleeping, concentrating, eating or remembering even simple tasks. This is common and should pass after a while. Over time, the caring support of family and friends can help to lessen the emotional impact and ultimately make the changes brought about by the tragedy more manageable. You may feel that the world is a much more dangerous place today than you did yesterday. It will take some time to recover your sense of equilibrium. Meanwhile, you may wonder how to go on living your daily life. You can strengthen your resilience — the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity in the days and weeks ahead.

Here are some tips:

Talk about it. It often helps to speak with others who have shared your experiences so you do not feel so different or alone. Ask for support from people who care about you and who will listen to your concerns. Receiving support and care can be comforting and reassuring.

Gain perspective. When senseless violence occurs, it's easy to become overwhelmed and harbor a negative or pessimistic outlook. Balance that viewpoint by reminding yourself of people and events which are meaningful and comforting, even encouraging. Striving for balance empowers you and allows for a healthier perspective on yourself and the world around you.

Turn it off and take a break. You may want to keep informed, but try to limit the amount of news you take in whether it's from the internet, television, newspapers or magazines. While getting the news informs you, being overexposed to it can actually increase your stress. The images can be very powerful in reawakening your feelings of distress. Also, schedule breaks to distract yourself from thinking about last week's incidents and focus instead on something you enjoy. Try to do something that will lift your spirits.

Honor your feelings. Remember that it is common to have a range of emotions after traumatic events. You may experience intense stress similar to the effects of a physical injury. For example, you may feel exhausted, sore or off balance.

Take care of yourself. Engage in healthy behaviors to enhance your ability to cope with excessive stress. Eat well-balanced meals, get plenty of rest and build physical activity into your day. Avoid alcohol and drugs because they can suppress your feelings rather than help you to manage and lessen your distress. In addition, alcohol and drugs may intensify your emotional or physical pain. Establish or re-establish routines such as eating meals at regular times and following an exercise program. If you are having trouble sleeping, try some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation or yoga.

Help others or do something productive. Locate resources in your community on ways that you can help. Helping someone else often has the benefit of making you feel better, too.

If you have lost family or friends to racially charged violence or similar events. Remember that grief is a long process that can be retriggered by memories. Give yourself time to experience your feelings and to recover. For some, this might involve staying at home; for others it may mean getting back to your daily routine. Dealing with the shock and trauma will take time. It is typical to expect many ups and downs.

For many people, using the tips and strategies mentioned above may be sufficient to get through the current crisis. At times, however, an individual can get stuck or have difficulty managing intense reactions. A licensed mental health professional can assist you in developing an appropriate strategy for moving forward. It is important to *get professional help* if you feel like you are unable to function or perform basic activities of daily living.

This Special Edition newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice. If you are an employee or eligible dependent of an organization contracting with CONCERN: EAP and need additional assistance for emotional support and finding local resources, you can request counseling and work/life services by phoning **800.344.4222**, answered live 24/7 or visiting our website www.concern-eap.com to request services via a confidential online form.

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