



HUMAN RESOURCES AND LABOR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

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To: County Staff

From: Andrew S. McKinnon, Director
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Date: November 30, 2021

Re: Tragedy at Oxford High School

As you may have heard, there was a terrible tragedy that unfolded at Oxford High School today. We have numerous employees who reside in Oxford and while we don't know if they were directly impacted, it is reasonable to believe that at least some have children in the Oxford school district. Further, we know that in a small community, everyone is deeply impacted from a tragedy of this nature.

In addition to the impact on the individual community, we all consider our loved ones and how this would be just too much to bear. We lean on each other in times of sadness and in this county we always encourage reaching out to Ulliance, our employee assistance program provider, for any support or assistance you feel you may need. They can be reached at 1-800-448-8326. They can help you rebuild your resiliency and move forward in a healthy, productive manner. Additional information about grief and healing from trauma is attached below.

Please join us in praying for the Oxford community.

What We Need During Grief

Time

Take time to lament and time with others whom you trust and who will listen when you need to talk. Give yourself time to understand the feelings that go along with loss without judging yourself.

Hope

You may find hope and comfort from those who have experienced a similar loss. Finding out some things that helped others and realizing that they have recovered may give you hope that sometime in the future your grief will be less raw and painful as well.

Caring

Try to allow yourself to accept the caring expressions from others, even if it seems uneasy at first. By helping a friend or relative also suffering the same loss may bring a feeling of closeness with that person.

Goals

Depending on the severity of the incident you've experienced, you may feel like life has no exact purpose. At times like these, small goals to live by are helpful. Something to look forward to is a good start, like grabbing coffee with a friend tonight, a movie next week, and a weekend trip next month to help you get through the time in the immediate future. At first, don't be surprised if your enjoyment of these things is lessened. This is normal and will pass as your hardship mends.

Small Pleasures

Do not underestimate the healing effects of small pleasures as you are ready. Sunsets, a walk in the woods, journaling your thoughts, sharing a favorite food — all of these are small steps toward regaining your pleasure in life itself.

Permission to Backslide

Sometimes after a period of feeling good, we find ourselves back in the feelings of extreme sadness, despair, or anger. This is often the nature of grief, up and down, and it may happen over and over for a time. It happens because, as humans, we cannot take in all of the pain and the meaning of death at once. So we let it in a little at a time.

Help

Remember you may be a rookie at the grief experience you're going through. This may be the first loss of someone close to you. You're new at this, and you're not sure what to do. As with any new skill, sometimes it's nice to have some help, a friend or counselor with whom to talk.

Source: Maryann Harter Danson, R.N., M.S., Hilltop Hospice, Grand Junction, Colorado

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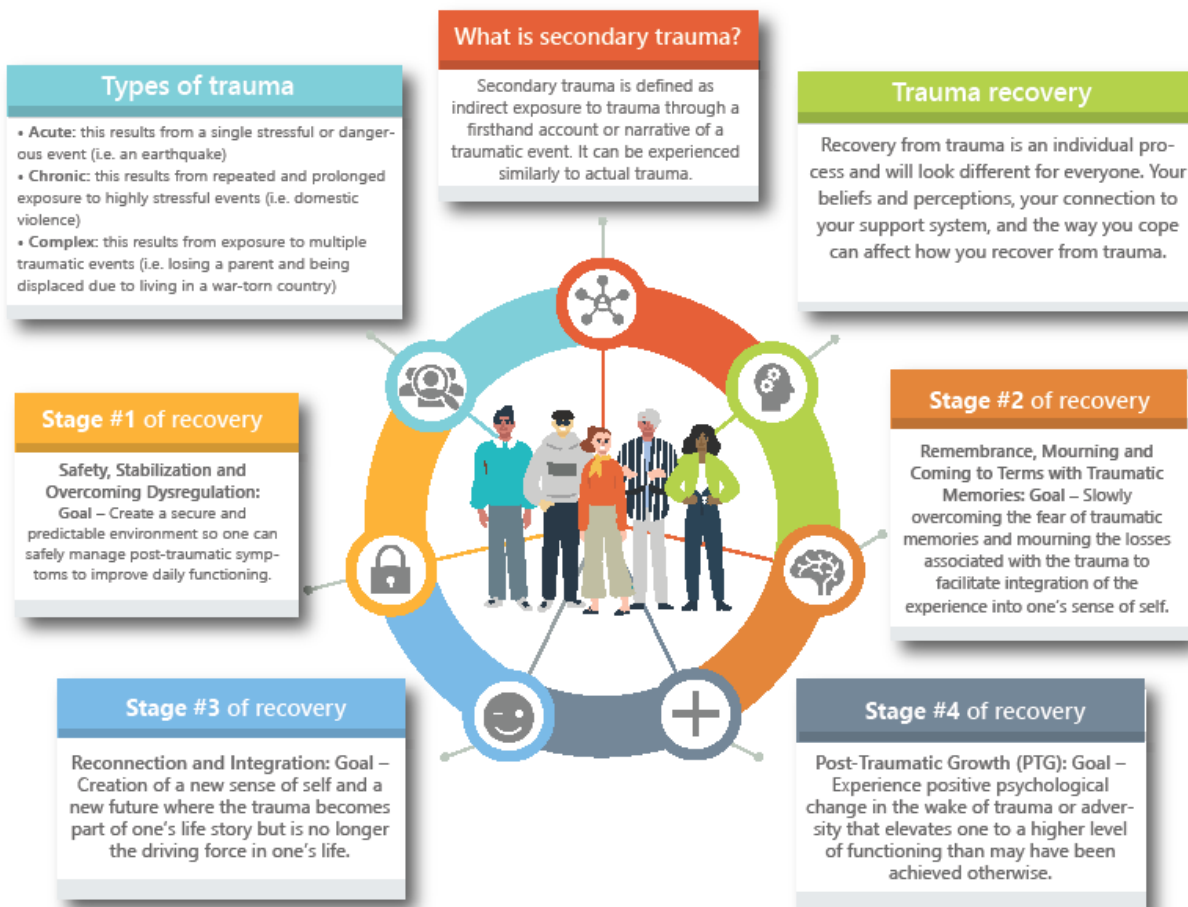
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Ulliance
Enhancing People. Improving Business.

Trauma is an emotional response to a deeply distressing, disturbing or dangerous experience that can overwhelm an individual's ability to cope and can exceed one's ability to integrate emotions involved with the experience.

★ STATS: TRAUMA & ITS EFFECTS

- 70% of adults (approx. 223.4 million people) in the U.S have experienced some type of traumatic event at least once in their lives
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder affects around 3.5% of the U.S population (approx. 8 million people) in a given year
- Trauma is a risk factor for nearly all behavioral health and substance use disorders



How can Ulliance help?

In the aftermath of a traumatic event, one may need prompt emotional support. Ulliance provides 24/7/365 telephonic support for any emotional crisis you or your immediate family member may experience.

In addition, working through a traumatic event and experiencing recovery often requires the help of a mental health professional. Ulliance offers free, confidential support and resources such as:

- Counseling to help you manage post-traumatic symptoms
- Coaching as a tool to help you learn about Post-Traumatic Growth
- Resources on trauma and recovery

For any of these services—call 800.448.8326