



## DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Collectively healing in the aftermath of tragic events

Monday, October 30, 2023

Dear Colleague,

The tragic death of a student on campus last week has been a shocking and deeply disturbing experience for our community. This event, coupled with the ongoing traumatic events in the world, can all become overwhelming and trigger many complex emotions. Some may experience changes in energy or an inability to focus. You may feel numb, detached, and empty, or be unable to accept what has happened.

Depending on how close you were to the event, your symptoms may be more intense. Please know that all of what you feel is normal and the result of experiencing a traumatic event.

In the days to come, allow yourself to feel and express your emotions. You may be struggling with the thoughts that it is better to hold yourself together alone, continue regular routines, and avoid experiencing your emotions! This approach will only delay healing and deepen your pain.

If you are struggling to cope, it's essential to seek help in this time of distress. Facing the trauma that we experience as a community can be intense. If we can learn to ask for help, we can discover our resilience and healing power as a community.

The team at the [Faculty Staff Assistance Program](#) is here to support you. We invite you to reach out to us at 301.314.8170 or 301.314.8099 to arrange a consultation for personal or organizational needs.

### **Here are a few practical tips to help you as you heal:**

**Ask for help:** Death is painful and leaves an emotional impact that is sometimes indescribable. Stay honest about what you are feeling and experiencing, and make use of the campus community. Learn about all the available resources on campus and ask for help.

**Take care of yourself:** Be mindful of your body. Eat, sleep, rest, and hydrate. As simple as this sounds, we must remember to eat and care for ourselves with basic care necessities.

**Practice self-compassion:** No harsh critical judgments! You matter, and your feelings are valid. Speak to yourself as you would speak to a friend who is having a hard time. Negative self-talk with a critical analysis of yourself in this experience will not foster a sense of hope.

**Take Breaks:** Honor yourself with the breaks you need to breathe and re-group.

**Connect with your community:** Stay honest about what you feel and connect in the community to create safe checks-ins and healing spaces!

Remember, we are all in this together. One day, one step, one tear at a time, we will heal!

In Wellness,

Dr. Tonya C. Phillips, She/Her/Hers

Program Manager, Faculty Staff Assistance Program, University Health Center