The Tragedy in Orlando
Tips on Managing Distress

We join with the world in expressing our grief and sorrow to the family, friends and the communities impacted by this tragic violence. In particular, we recognize the deleterious impact this tragedy might have on members of the LGBTQ community (especially Latinx individuals), the Latinx community and the broader community itself.

We recognize that there can be a tendency to implicitly link individuals and groups, who may share a perceived identity similar to that of the perpetrator’s, that can lead to these individuals and groups being unjustly victimized in the aftermath of such a tragedy.

Tragedies can affect a person’s sense of safety in the world. It can lead to struggling to understand how such a thing could occur; how such terrible violence could be perpetrated. There are a wide variety of emotions that people can experience, and can include anything from a sense of shock, grief and sorrow, to fear and anger. One can find oneself feeling numb, apathetic, or disillusioned. There may be changes in sleep, appetite, ability to focus, or memory.

Such reactions are not uncommon, and frequently become less distressing with the passage of time. If you find yourself struggling, there are some things that you can do to regain your sense of equilibrium. You can strengthen; re-awaken your natural resilience in the days and weeks ahead. The following are some suggestions that might be useful in adapting to, and coping with this experience. Some recommendations are taken from the American Psychological Association’s “Managing your distress in the aftermath of a shooting” (http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/mass-shooting.aspx).

- **Acknowledge and honor your feelings and thoughts.** There is no “right” way to respond, and people will respond differently. You are who you are, and that is enough.
- **Spend time with people** who are your supports. Receiving support often helps to comfort and reassure, and keeps you connected.
It also can help to share your experience with others, who themselves have experienced these events. This helps avoid a tendency to isolate oneself; addresses the feeling of being alone; and can "normalize" your reaction.

If you notice a growing sense of pessimism, remind yourself of people and things that are meaningful to you. This allows for a more balanced perspective of yourself and your world.

Limit overexposure to the news of the tragedy. While needing to be informed, be aware that overexposure can lead to increased stress.

Take care of yourself and build reserves by paying attention to what you eat, exercise, sleep, etc. Sometimes, relaxation techniques like yoga/tai chi, meditation, and deep breathing can help. Do activities that you enjoy. These all can help you to manage and lessen distress.

Take action and do something productive. It can be beneficial to find ways that you can help others who have been negatively impacted by the tragedy. This can reduce feelings of helplessness/powerlessness.

If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, consider seeking out a mental health professional who can help you address your concerns. For students, the CU Denver Counseling Center is a free, confidential resource.

Resources

CU Denver Student and Community Counseling Center
Tivoli Student Union
Suite 454
303/556-4372
www.ucdenver.edu/counselingcenter
Counseling services are free and confidential for CU Denver students. To schedule an appointment you may call the Center or drop in.

Anschutz Medical Campus Student Mental Health Service
Building 500, Level 2
303-724-4716
SMHservice@ucdenver.edu.
CU Anschutz students may receive counseling at the Anschutz Medical Campus Student Mental Health Service.

Campus Assessment, Response, & Evaluation Team (CARE)
Tivoli Student Union
Suite 227
CARE Team addresses the health and safety needs of students as well as the campus community.

**Office of Case Management**
Tivoli Student Union
Suite 227
303-352-3579
[www.ucdenver.edu/CSM](http://www.ucdenver.edu/CSM)

The Office of Case Management serves the needs of the campus community and struggling students. Case management services include but are not limited to: providing intervention, advocacy, resources and referrals as well as follow-up services for students who are experiencing significant difficulties.

**GLBT Student Services**
Tivoli Student Union
Suite 213
303-556-6333

Provides a safe space for all in our community to explore and increase their understanding of issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

**Educational Opportunity Programs**
Student Commons
Suite 2007
303-315-1880

Offer support and resources for all students, faculty and staff, with particular focus on Latinx, Asian American, American Indian, and Black students.