

Tragic events are disorienting, confusing, and overwhelming. It is normal to experience many different feelings at different intensities. It is also normal to experience no feelings at all or mostly anger. Everyone reacts to stress differently. During these difficult times, it is especially important to trust yourself and be mindful that you possess a lifetime of experiences in coping with hardship.

Questions or concerns you may have

I am having nightmares and painful images of the event that scare me. What does this mean?

This is the mind's natural way to process what you have gone through. One strategy for coping with these may be to *accept* what you are experiencing (try not to push it away) and *acknowledge* how you are feeling. The image will gradually dissolve, and the frequency with which you experience these images will lessen over time.

I can't sleep, and I don't really feel like eating.

Stress impacts our mind as well as our body. Sometimes, it can be harder to cope with stress when we are tired and hungry. If meals are hard, smoothies and other snacks that may be easier. Consider talking to a provider about treatments for insomnia if you are having a difficult time sleeping.

I don't want to go places that remind me of the shooting or talk to people about what happened.

At the beginning, this response is normal and logical – these things are painful reminders. Also, watching too much news or repeating your story too many times can be unhelpful.

After awhile, avoiding activities like these may constrict your lifestyle. At a slow and moderate pace, consider getting back to your daily routine. Doing activities like these will help you feel more in control about ways you are handling the stress over time.

Why did this happen?

Painful, unexpected events disrupt our sense of safety in the world. To feel better, it is tempting to ask a lot of questions about why this happened. The world contains both danger and safety. The altercation on 10/5 at the Harshbarger building was unsafe but not all altercations are unsafe and not all campus buildings are unsafe.

It is also tempting to wonder about alternatives: if ____ had happened instead, then maybe the outcome could have been different? There is no way to know that a change in behaviors (or even community policy) would have led to a better outcome. *Bad things can happen to good people and for no logical reason.*

Because I went through this, will I have posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

Most people heal naturally after a stressful event. A number of things have been found to be helpful in helping the healing process, like:

- Remembering that friends, family, community (neighbors, churches, and other organizations), and providers are there for you. Consider asking them to support you in going at your own pace. If you begin to feel isolated, consider reaching-out to others.
- *Allowing Not Forcing.* Allow yourself to feel and express emotions that arise or don't arise. Allow yourself time to take breaks and engage in positive and uplifting activities, like hobbies, exercise, watching a comedy, and spiritual practice. Allow yourself permission to ask for help.
 - Counseling & Psych Services, caps.arizona.edu, 520-621-3334
 - UAHS EDI Mental Health Wellness, diversity.uahs.arizona.edu/mental-health-wellness Dr. Jenna Teso (520) 626-3812
 - Employee Assistance Counseling, available 24/7 to all University of Arizona employees, their dependents and members of their households, 877-327-2362 (TTY: 800-697-0353)
 - Life & Work Connections, lifework.arizona.edu, 520-621-2493