

Support and Recovery: Navigating the Aftermath of a Community Tragedy

The recent shooting at Brooklands Plaza Splash Pad in Rochester Hills, Michigan affected children, parents, and community members across the state and beyond. Offering early emotional support is a vital step in beginning to heal from this tragedy and possibly minimizing harmful, long-term effects from this trauma.

It is normal to feel overwhelmed and anxious in response to traumatic events. These feelings can affect our ability to focus on work, engage with others, and take care of ourselves. Your Life Advisor EAP team is available to offer assistance and counseling services to help you and your family navigate the complex feelings that may arise in response to this event.

Here are some things that you can do to take care of your mental health:

1. **Limit your exposure to news coverage:** While it's important to stay informed, consuming excessive news coverage can be overwhelming and increase your anxiety. Consider taking a break from the news and focusing on activities that bring you comfort.
2. **Seek support from family and friends:** Talking to loved ones about how you're feeling can help you process your emotions and feel less alone. It's okay to ask for support from those you trust.
3. **Reach out to your Life Advisor EAP:** We have trained professionals who are here to support you. Whether you need to talk to someone about how you're feeling or want to access counseling services, we're here to help.
4. **Take time for self-care:** Self-care is essential for maintaining good mental health. Engage in activities that bring you joy and help you feel calm, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time outdoors.

For Parents

It's natural for children to feel fearful when a traumatic incident involves their peers. It can be destabilizing to their sense of security, trust, and hope. Children may express their feelings about this situation differently than adults do. **Here are some signs parents might observe:**

1. **Look for sudden changes:** especially in sleeping and eating patterns. Has their mood changed? Are they isolating more, or wanting to avoid certain places or activities they once were able to tolerate?

Are they having more physical complaints, either real or imagined? Has the way they play changed or stopped altogether? Are they testing limits more than usual?

2. **Look for regression:** Do they struggle with activities that they have previously mastered, such as tying shoes, self-care activities, or have they begun wetting the bed, especially for younger ones? Have older children and teens seemed to genuinely forget how to do household chores, homework assignments, or how to operate devices they previously mastered? Do they appear disorganized or confused?
3. **Look for anxiety:** Do you find they are more clingy or distant than usual? Do they appear hyper-alert or over-reactive to sudden or loud noises? Are they having nightmares? Do they express worries or negative thoughts frequently? Are they having difficulty concentrating?
4. **Look for despondency:** Do they appear to be lacking energy or motivation? Do they complain of feeling tired or fall asleep at inappropriate times? Do they have difficulty making decisions? Do they appear sad or have crying spells?

The best thing a parent can do is listen. Be available and encourage a discussion of feelings without pressuring or overwhelming the child. Help them put words to their experience and reflect what they say so that they can feel understood. Remember the goal is not to solve every issue the child talks about, but rather to listen, validate, and reflect on what has been heard.

As a reminder the Life Advisor EAP is confidential and free. This benefit covers you, your spouse/partner and dependents through the age of 26. We are here to help. Please call the 800# below to get support today.

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your
Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short-term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**