



The recent shootings at Virginia Tech can impact us in such a way that our sense of safety and day-to-day coping skills may not be enough. Taking care of ourselves and the people we love may now present special challenges as we go about our daily lives. We are presenting this information to assist you.

Range of Reactions

As with any stressor or trauma there is a range of individualized reactions. When dangerous situations occur outside of our control, it is normal to feel:

- fear
- anger
- numb
- denial
- suspicious
- stress
- sadness
- shock

Because the range of reactions is so broad, it is important to be accepting of your own and others' responses.

Why We React to Danger

Fear has a place. Fear can motivate us to take positive action to ensure safety. Presently, we are getting overwhelmed with information, making it difficult to discern what is helpful in assessing danger. It is natural to try to make sense of unpredictable random acts, however, we may get bogged down in trying to manage events that are out of our control. In the process of trying to make sense of those, we may escalate our level of fear instead of reducing it. Focusing on what we do have control over and practicing good self-care is our best defense.

Suggestions for Coping

In addition to your current coping skills, here are some suggestions for these unprecedented times.

- Talk—share your thoughts and feelings with trusted family and friends.
- Practice good self-care—healthy eating, adequate sleeping, exercising, and avoiding drugs and alcohol.
- Limit media exposure—use discretion when watching television or listening to the radio.
- Practice acceptance of others—allow differences in coping styles.
- Exercise control where you have it—simplify your life, develop and follow a safety plan, etc.
- Manage stress—practice healthy coping skills with things that are out of your control.

These are difficult times, and your Employee Assistance Program is here to help. If your reaction is interfering with your ability to function, or you have concerns about yourself or your loved ones, please call us at **1-800-346-0110**. We are here to help.