

OCHN Offers Mental Health Tips in Response to Colorado School Shooting

OAKLAND COUNTY, MI (May 8, 2019) – Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) is releasing tips for families and individuals to manage stress or trauma associated with national tragedies, such as the recent shooting at STEM School Highlands Ranch in Colorado.

Tips for Parents:

- Acknowledge what happened. If your child is talking or asking about traumatic events, it is important for the caregivers / loved ones in their life to acknowledge what happened, provide age-appropriate information, and be supportive.
- Parents may want to approach older children who may have seen the news or videos on social media and find out what they know and what their thoughts / feelings are about what happened.
- Recognize the effect this has on your child. Talk to your child about their thoughts and emotions as it pertains to the event and validate their feelings and concerns. With mass shootings in public places and places of worship, this is a valid concern for them, and all adults need to take their viewpoint and concerns into consideration.
- Help your child to feel safe. A sense of normalcy and routine as soon as possible after an event helps to re-establish a child's sense of safety and structure. Discuss whatever positive aspects can be found in tragic events such as the quick police response and how community members and citizens across the country are coming together to support those affected.

Tips for Adults:

- Everyone experiences events and trauma in different ways and however they think or feel after an event like this is okay. Some people respond with fear, some anger, some shock, sadness, etc. Encourage people to talk about what they are thinking and feeling. Seek support from friends, family, or professionals if necessary.
- Try to get back to routines and schedules to promote feelings of consistency and balance to reduce fear and provide a feeling of returning control and predictability.
- Be mindful to consider the amount of exposure to the news / media, particularly to children. It is okay to keep updated, but continuing to view the images, etc. will worsen and prolong the issues the person is experiencing.

Individuals may also contact the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline for support at 1.800.231.1127.

About OCHN

OCHN has a long-standing history of promoting independence, choice, and community inclusion for adults and children with intellectual / developmental disabilities, mental health concerns, and substance use disorders. Its mission to “inspire hope, empower people, and strengthen communities” reflects an unyielding belief in a "Valuable System for Valued People." Programs and supports provided by OCHN's service network are available at www.oaklandchn.org.

Most people who receive services through Oakland County's public mental health system, which is managed by OCHN, have Medicaid insurance coverage.

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