Violent Events in the News

Hearing about violent events in the news is often disturbing. Reports of mass shootings, terrorist attacks and other violent incidents may leave you feeling sad, angry, or afraid. Common reactions include:

- **Feeling vulnerable and insecure.** Violent incidents may affect your sense of personal safety and security. You may find yourself worrying more about family members — especially children — when they are not with you.

- **Fear of the unknown.** Violence is a reminder that you can’t control the behavior of others. You may feel uncomfortable attending public events or traveling. You may also worry about family members when they engage in these activities.

- **Variable emotions.** You may feel a wide range of emotions, including sadness, anger, guilt, frustration, and dread. Some people may need to talk about the event, while others may want to avoid discussing it at all.

- **Repressed feelings.** To ward off anxiety, people sometimes repress their feelings, only to have them emerge in other ways, such as physical symptoms, hyperactivity, working too much, etc.

- **Delayed reactions.** If you have suffered trauma in the past, you may re-experience your emotional responses from that event.

- **Identifying with those involved.** You may find that you are more affected by an incident if you identify with the individuals who were injured or killed.

If you or someone you know is struggling with news of a violent incident, these steps may help:

- **Be accepting.** Don’t judge emotional reactions or strong feelings as right or wrong. News of violence or death can trigger complex emotions, and everyone will react differently.

- **Connect with others.** Talking with friends and family is often comforting. When others come to you, listen to their concerns and provide reassurance (this is especially important for children).

- **Limit media exposure.** If the news is getting to be too much, take a time out. Turn off the TV or computer and silence your phone alerts. Take a walk or engage in a relaxing activity instead.

- **Be safe.** Educate yourself about situational awareness in public places. Talking about practical safety tips may help you regain a sense of control.

If you are troubled by news of a violent event, LifeMatters can help. Call 24/7/365.

Call LifeMatters® toll-free anytime. 1-800-367-7474

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