

COPING SKILLS

The recent random murders in the Washington metropolitan area have led to concern and uncertainty that strain our everyday coping skills. Due to the randomness of the shootings, there may be additional stress and anxiety in going about our normal routines. The following are some reminders and suggestions for coping with stress.

- Talk with others about what you experienced and how you feel now. Talking about feelings reduces their intensity, helps you define what you feel and clarifies things in your own mind. As you talk, you tend to feel more in control of your emotions.
- Listen to others. Helping others cope has an added benefit.
- Limit time in front of the television. Repeated exposure replays the traumatic events and prolongs symptoms.
- Remain active, exercise and eat a healthy diet.
- Stay away from alcohol/drugs or abuse of medications as a coping technique. Substances only add to any symptoms of depression and complicate the problem.
- Write about your impressions, feelings and recollections. Research shows that for some people, this may be as helpful as talking. Keep a journal. If you experience sleeplessness, writing can help you relax enough to sleep.
- Participate in normal activities such as hobbies, music or sports. Even if it takes an effort to get going, once you start you will feel the usual sense of pleasure, fulfillment and satisfaction.
- Do something positive. Use the opportunity to re-evaluate what is important in your life and take action.

If you have some concern about your coping skills and would like additional assistance, your Employee Assistance program through MenningerCare Systems is available. Call 800-448-4434.

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MenningerCare
Systems

Eastern Region Headquarters
7918 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 230
McLean, VA 22102
Tel: **703 448 8101**
800 448 4434