

Tips for Parents of UT Students on Coping with Trauma

Events such as those at Virginia Tech are horrifying and arouse anxiety in various ways. College students may feel especially vulnerable. If this could happen on one campus, they are reminded that it could happen anywhere.

The following are some suggestions for relating to your student in the aftermath:

- Talk with your student as often as needed. You may find that he or she wants more contact with family at this time, and that is normal.
- Encourage your student to express his or her feelings about the incident. Provide support, realizing that all feelings are legitimate.
- Reassure your student that strong feelings after a tragedy are not uncommon. You might say, “It must have been so upsetting to hear about the shootings at Virginia Tech.”
- Realize that being away from home may be disconcerting at this time; your student may have never experienced this form of anxiety previously.
- Consider asking, “Are you worried about anything at this point?” This will give your student the opportunity to express any particular fears.
- Encourage your student to seek support from fellow students. Advise your student to be alert to campus communications and familiar with emergency procedures on campus.
- If your student needs to talk with a professional, suggest that he or she speak with one of our counselors. Students may schedule an appointment 8am-4pm M-F by visiting the Counseling & Mental Health Center (5th floor of the Student Services Building), or by calling 512-471-3515. In addition, confidential telephone counseling is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 512-471-2255.
- If parents are concerned about their student and want to consult with a professional, call Telephone Counseling at 512-471-2255. We will be glad to discuss ways to help your student with you.

*Adapted with permission from Dr. Karen Settle,
Director of Counseling and Testing at Southern Methodist University.*

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