



Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada's

RESILIENCY & JUSTICE CENTER

Trauma Coping Tips

People grieve and cope with trauma in different ways and over varying lengths of time. Reminders of violent crimes can cause distress for survivors, family members of victims, and others impacted. Special events, holidays, anniversaries, hearing certain songs or loud noises like fireworks, watching news stories about other violent events, or experiencing crowds may cause feelings of fear, anxiety, guilt, flashbacks, or other symptoms. These suggestions from mental health experts may help you cope:

- **Stay in your normal routine as much as possible.** Even if you don't feel like it, participate in activities and try to carry on with your usual chores. It helps to reduce stress if you continue doing the things you would normally do every day. Anniversaries, holidays, and birthdays may be particularly difficult, especially for those who lost a loved one. Plan to connect with people who care about you with in-person and virtual events.
- **Reach out for help.** Feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety, and depression are common after a traumatic event. When you feel distressed, don't be socially isolated. Talk to someone who is understanding and cares about you such as a friend, family member, clergy member, or therapist. You may also call us at 702-455-2433 (AIDE) or email resiliencyandjustice@lacs.org. Outside of our regular business hours, call or text 988 or go to 988lifeline.org to connect with a trained crisis counselor in English or Spanish.
- **Seek counseling.** If you're struggling with memories, flashbacks, or reminders of violence, counseling can offer some coping strategies. It's not uncommon for survivors of mass violence to seek counseling months or even years after an event. Symptoms caused by trauma include difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite, fatigue, isolation, increased use of drugs or alcohol, avoidance of people or places that remind you of the traumatic event, and inability to feel or control emotions.
- **Deal with feelings of survivor's guilt.** It's not unusual for survivors of a traumatic event to feel guilt. To process this emotion, it may help to find a way to honor those who died or were injured by remembering them in private or in connection virtually with your family, your faith community, or the community at large.
- **Connecting with other survivors may help.** Many people who have suffered from mass violence say it's helpful over time to connect with other survivors. The Resiliency & Justice Center can help connect survivors with virtual support groups and integrative services that are available regardless of your location. Contact us for information through our website or call us.



- **Learn what triggers your anxiety.** If images of the event or loud noises trigger unease, remind yourself that the event is not happening again and these bad feelings will pass. Try writing down what bothers you when you are feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern. Practice the coping skills that help—breathing, walking, and talking to others..

General Tips for Dealing with Stress & Anxiety

- **Take a time-out.** Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, or learn self-regulation and relaxation techniques. Stepping back from the problem helps clear your head.
- **Maintain healthy routines.** Eat well-balanced meals. Don't skip any meals. Keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand. Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks.
- **Get enough sleep.** When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest.
- **Be physically active.** Find an app, YouTube channel, or other online program that promotes physical activity. Short walks or dancing in your living room can help you feel good and maintain your health.
- **Take deep breaths.** Inhale and exhale slowly.
- **Count to 10 slowly.** Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.
- **Stay grounded and present.** Use grounding techniques to connect you to the here and now. Focus on the details present in your surroundings or on neutral physical sensations. Count something that you notice such as trees, people with hats, or floor tiles. Notice the colors that you see or the flavors that you taste.
- **Distract yourself.** Organize a drawer or area of your home, get a drink of water, wash your hands, or listen to audiobooks, podcasts, or music. Research virtual tours of museums and national parks available online.
- **Talk to someone.** Let others know when you're feeling overwhelmed and how they can help.
- **Connect with others.** Participate in a virtual support group or interest group. Connect by phone, text, or video with someone who you trust and are comfortable with.
- **Maintain a positive attitude.** Try reframing any negative thoughts into positive ones. Try to view obstacles as opportunities to create new solutions.
- **Get involved.** Research ways to continue to help or be connected within your community, which creates a support network and gives you a break from everyday stress.

