Tips for Parents On Coping With Trauma

Events such as those at Virginia Tech are horrifying and arouse anxiety in various ways. University students may feel especially vulnerable.

Here are some suggestions for relating to your sons or daughters in the aftermath.

- Talk with them as often as needed. You may find that they want more contact with family at this time, and that is normal.

- Realize that being away from home may be disconcerting at this time; they may have never experienced this form of anxiety previously.

- Encourage them to express their feelings about the incident. Provide support, realizing that all feelings are legitimate.

- Reassure them that strong feelings after a tragedy are not uncommon. You might ask, “It must have been so upsetting to hear about [ ]”

- Consider asking, “what are you most worried about?” This will give them the opportunity to express any particular fears.

- Encourage them to seek support from fellow students.

- If they need to talk with a professional, suggest a visit to the Counselling or Health Centres.

Acknowledgements: These notes have been adapted from an article of the same name from the Southern Methodist University USA.
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