



# Special Edition

## Thursday December 6, 2007

### Coping with the Omaha Tragedy

This local disaster, a tragedy of unparalleled magnitude in Omaha, Nebraska, will provoke some feelings of disbelief and emotional response in all of us. As we continue to follow the unfolding news stories, we are likely to face feelings of stress, sadness, anger, fear, grief and loss. Such feelings are a normal response to an intense, painful emotional trauma.

At such a sensitive time, it is especially important to be considerate of our fellow employees, family, friends, and ourselves. There is a tendency to try and carry on normally in the workplace after a tragedy, but circumstances are not “normal”. The aftershocks of this devastating event will be pervasive and long lasting.

Throughout this difficult time, please remember that all of us at Best Care EAP care deeply about the health and safety of our client companies, employees, and community. The following suggestions are provided by Best Care EAP as we all deal with this tragedy.

#### **DO:**

- Expect these incidents to upset you and those around you.
- Allow yourself to grieve.
- Remind yourself that post-tragedy feelings of shock, disbelief and outrage are normal.
- Spend time with supportive people. Talk about the tragedy with people you trust, but understand that sometimes comfort can come from the mere presence of others, without conversation.
- Continue to care for your health and wellness. Exercise and maintain a healthy diet.
- Establish a sense of safety and follow a familiar routine.
- Know your limits. Be patient with yourself.
- Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings if you find it helpful.

#### **DON'T:**

- Withdraw from family, friends and coworkers.
- Pretend that everything is okay.
- Automatically stay away from work.
- Take on new major projects or make major changes if they are not necessary.
- End leisure activities.
- Use alcohol, caffeine or other mood-altering substances to numb yourself.
- Think that you are “crazy” or “losing it”.
- Have unrealistic expectations of your recovery time.



### The Stages of Grief

These may occur in any order. And they will likely be repeated throughout the recovery process.

- Denial
- Shock and confusion
- Sadness and tears
- Irritability and arguments
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Aftershocks
- Acceptance
- Return to a “new normal”

### Symptoms of Grief

- Tears, irritability
- Preoccupation, lack of concentration
- Confusion, lack of decision-making ability
- Tension, nervousness
- Eating and sleeping disturbances
- Increased compulsive behaviors (alcohol and drug use)
- Lack of energy and motivation
- Depression

### Best Care Can Help

While it's normal to experience these stages and symptoms, it's not unusual to find that serious problems can persist and continue to interfere with daily living. If you feel overwhelming nervousness or lingering sadness that adversely affects your job performance and relationships, Best Care can help. Our professional counselors are available for you and your family members to help you through this time of crisis and confusion.

- ❖ Free, confidential counseling for employees and their family members.
- ❖ Best Care professionals at the worksite for consultation and counseling.
- ❖ Critical incident stress debriefings, individual counseling and grief process groups.

We encourage you to access the services of Best Care for short term counseling and emergency services. Daytime, evening, and weekend appointments are available. Crisis and emergency services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ***To arrange for a confidential appointment with a counselor near you, call (402) 354-8000 or (800) 666-8606.***

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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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