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## Department of Psychology

### In the Aftermath of Trauma

To some degree, everyone living in Orlando has been affected by the horrific shooting at the Pulse nightclub last weekend. We grieve for the lives lost and for their families, and we offer our love and support to the victims recovering from their injuries.

If you have been touched by this event in any way, you may be having trouble sleeping. You may have nightmares. You may have lost your appetite. You may find that you are unable to stop thinking about the event. You may feel anxious, fearful, keyed up or unable to relax. You may suddenly feel as if the event is happening again.

In the immediate aftermath of such a horrific event, these feelings and behaviors are normal and are to be expected. Your mind is trying to process information and it will take time. For most of us, the outcome will be recovery and resilience. Just as our bodies take time to heal after an injury or surgery, our minds will heal as we recover from this event. This means that over the next few weeks to perhaps even over a month or two months, most people will see their reactions to the event lessening as time progresses. You will find that your appetite is coming back, you are sleeping better and you are not so focused on the event. This is the process of recovery.

Here are some things that you can do in the meantime to help the recovery process.

1. Try to sleep whenever you can and even if you cannot eat a lot, eat well. Take care of your body so that your body can take care of you.
2. Turn to the people you trust - friends, family, co-workers and talk to them— but only if and when you want to. Do not feel that you have to talk to people – we all recover differently and you should not feel that you *must* do something or talk to someone.
3. If you are the friend or relative of someone who has been affected by this tragedy and they want to talk to you
  - listen supportively
  - do not probe for details or try to get them to “grieve”
  - let the person say what they want to say – do not push for more
  - remind them that recovering from this event takes time – all feelings are normal and natural to the recovery process

Full recovery will take several months, but if there is no decrease in symptoms after one or two months, consider seeking professional help.

UCF RESTORES stands with every member of our community during this sad time. You are not alone. Together, we will recover. Together, we will find peace.

We can be reached at 407-823-3910 (for clinical services).