

Exercising Respect and Sensitivity Following Community Violence

Following any tragedy or act of violence in your community, there will be varying opinions, viewpoints and a wide range of feelings among peers in response to the event. It's important to keep in mind that heightened feelings of any kind can directly affect relationships in the workplace.

Emotional reactions, such as increased anxiety, anger and stress, may continue for many days and even weeks following a violent event. Heightened feelings of any kind can increase conflict between co-workers and others and can negatively affect relationships at all levels in the workplace.

Share viewpoints with care

It's tempting to assume that each of us has the 'correct' viewpoint and that our feelings are shared by others with whom we interact at work. In reality, our co-workers may not share our points of view about what happened. Our feelings may be different and possibly upsetting to co-workers or others.

Some people process their feelings and thoughts privately and it can be upsetting to hear a 'heated' conversation in their workspace. Talking about what happened can be helpful, but not for everyone. Please be aware that community violence affects everyone differently. In order to maintain a positive workplace that thrives, we need to remember to have respectful conversations with others.

Guidelines to help you be aware, respectful, sensitive and polite as you go through your workday:

- **Avoid conversations that can cause concern** or offend others.
- **Ask if it's OK to talk** to someone about what has happened.
- **Remember this is a work environment;** personal conversations shouldn't dominate. Work is the priority.
- **Be aware that others can overhear** your conversations. Please keep private conversations private. Others don't need to know your opinions and feelings.
- **Respect others** and their right not to share their thoughts and opinions.
- **Be aware of non-verbal reactions.** If someone turns away, it may be time to end a conversation.
- **Be sensitive,** compassionate and respectful regardless of anyone's personal opinions. Maintaining civility, courtesy and respect for others can help foster safety in the workplace.

Your EAP is here for you.

We're available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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