



Illinois Psychiatric Society

NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois Psychiatric Society Offers Condolences to Family and Friends of Shooting Victims

Chicago, Illinois - The Illinois Psychiatric Society (IPS), a state association of the American Psychiatric Association (APA), expresses its deepest sympathies to the families, friends and peers of the victims of the shocking university shooting tragedy at Northern Illinois University.

This type of trauma can have tremendous psychological impact on those affected. Individuals may have various stress reactions that present psychological, as well as physical symptoms. The causes behind such incidents are often complex, and there are usually no simple answers.

“Our immediate concerns rest with those who have been affected by the trauma, injuries and deaths in Illinois,” said Dr. Lisa Rone. “As psychiatrists, we are concerned that this tragedy may cause significant distress and pose a potential threat to the mental health of those involved. It is important for everyone to know that help is available and treatment does work.”

In light of the tragic events that have taken place this week, the Illinois Psychiatric Society is encouraging people to learn and identify the warning signs of depression and suicide and how to help a friend or family member who may be at risk.

Feelings of anxiety and depression following a traumatic event are natural and may persist for days, or for longer than a week. Depression has a variety of symptoms, but the most common are a deep feeling of sadness or a marked loss of interest or pleasure in activities.

By working together, parents, teachers, health care professionals and other concerned individuals can develop effective strategies to identify individuals who need help. In addition, lowering barriers to care will help people get treatment earlier and avoid many of the disabling aspects of mental illness.

“Fortunately these types of events are rare. What is unfortunate is that many people do not have access to mental healthcare and that stigma is still associated with getting treatment,” Dr. Rone said.

After a traumatic event has passed, the Illinois Psychiatric Society recommends following these steps:

1. Keep informed about new information and developments, but avoid overexposure to news rebroadcasts of the event. Be sure to use credible information sources to avoid speculation and rumors.

2. If you feel anxious, angry or depressed, you are not alone. Talk to friends, family or peers who likely are experiencing the same feelings.
3. If you have contact with children, keep open dialogues with them regarding their fears of danger. Let them know that, with time, healing from a tragedy is possible, even hoped for. Don't minimize the dangers, but talk about your ability to cope with tragedy and get through the ordeal.
4. Feelings of anxiety and depression following a traumatic event are natural. If these symptoms continue, even after order has been restored, or if these feelings begin to overwhelm you, seek the advice of a psychiatric physician in your local community.

For additional information about mental health issues including depression and suicide visit the APA's consumer Web site at www.HealthyMinds.org. For information regarding trauma and disasters, visit the APA's Disaster Psychiatry Web site at <http://www.psych.org/disasterpsych/>.

About the Illinois Psychiatric Association:

The Illinois Psychiatric Association is a district branch of a national medical specialty society whose more than 38,000 physician members specialize in diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psych.org and www.HealthyMinds.org.