



MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

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Contact: Jacy Conradt ■ Community Relations Coordinator
720-208-2234 ■ jconradt@mhacolorado.org

TIPS FOR DISCUSSING RECENT SCHOOL TRAGEDIES WITH STUDENTS

DENVER, Colo. – In light of the recent school shootings on the campus of Virginia Tech, it is highly likely that Colorado students are apprehensive about school safety and violence. The Mental Health Association of Colorado (MHAC) encourages parents, teachers and students to be aware that feelings and emotions may be close to the surface at this time and some students may experience the stresses more acutely because of the recent anniversary of Columbine and the shooting last fall at Platte Canyon High School.

Jeanne M. Rohner, President and CEO, of the Mental Health Association of Colorado offers this advice, “there are some very simple things parents and teachers can do to help students cope during these difficult times. Encourage discussion and also talk honestly about your own feelings concerning the violence. Communication is really key, and adults may need to take the first step, but it is so important to the healing and coping process.”

What are some other things that can be done to cope with this latest tragedy?

- Listen to one’s feelings and concerns and talk about them.
- Validate those feelings, don’t discount or dismiss them.
- Be aware that this situation is serious and it is OK to be afraid.
- Express emotions.
- Initiate conversation about these incidents and encourage dialogue.

Seek help if needed. If you are concerned about the reactions of a loved one, or have ongoing concerns about their behavior or emotions, contact a mental health professional or, at colleges, the student health center, for resources. Community mental health agencies also have crisis lines and support services to offer outside the school setting.

Local Community Resources:

Mental Health Association of Colorado

1385 S. Colorado Blvd. Ste. 610, Denver CO 80222
720-208-2220 or 800-456-3249 ■ www.mhacolorado.org

Creating Caring Communities (Bully-Proofing Your School program)

1385 S. Colorado Blvd. Ste. 610, Denver CO 80222
720-941-0700 ■ www.bullyproofing.org

1385 S. Colorado Blvd., Ste. 610, Denver, CO 80222
720-208-2220 ■ 800.456.3249 ■ 720-208-2250 fax
www.mhacolorado.org



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Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado

1385 S. Colorado Blvd. Ste. 610, Denver CO 80222
720-208-2220 ■ www.suicideprevention-colorado.org

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About the Mental Health Association of Colorado

The Mental Health Association of Colorado, the Colorado affiliate of the National Mental Health Association, is the catalyst and voice for the Colorado mental health movement. Through Education, Advocacy and Outreach, we provide resources to Coloradoans affected by the entire spectrum of mental health issues.