

How Do We Live in a World With So Much Trauma?

(Based on message sent by Dr. Peter Yellowlees, MBBS, MD, Chief Wellness Officer, UC Davis Health)

The members of the Office of Professional Well-being condemn gun violence.

If you're feeling hyper-vigilant and anxious following the country's latest mass shootings in Buffalo, Uvalde, and Tulsa, it's understandable and to be expected. Our country is averaging 10 mass shootings a week. 213 mass shootings this year alone. There are websites specifically focused on tracking these horrific events. [Gun Violence Archive.org](#) is one. The news of frequent mass shootings is a recurring trauma, occurring on top of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, racial and ethnic tensions and the impact of climate change - including the Hermits Peak and Calf Canyon fire, the largest fire in the United States so far this year and the largest ever recorded in New Mexico history. These continuous distressing incidents cause trauma to those more directly involved and also to us as individuals.

How should we deal with all this trauma and uncertainty? How do we stay informed but not overwhelmed? There are three core approaches we can all use.

1. At an individual level try to keep up your usual level of self-care and routines. Take care of yourself and your loved ones. Keep physically fit. Socialize safely, preferably outdoors. Keep masking as necessary – the current version of COVID is highly transmissible and a lot of our colleagues are off work. Stay in the moment and appreciate nature, your pets, and all the natural beauty around us. Work hard, but also relax and spend time with family, friends and loved ones. Check in with them. Tell them how important they are to you. Love them. Offer emotional, financial or physical assistance when you can - and accept their help when they offer it to you.
2. Talk about your fears with people you trust. Your spouse/partner. A loved one or true friend. But not too much. And not all the time. Don't stay glued to the TV for hours. Give social media a break. Maybe just check the news once or twice per day rather than constantly. Practice [three good things](#) or a [daily gratitude](#).
3. Do something to improve the situation. Become active. Educate yourself about issues that concern you. Consider donating time or money to organizations you feel may be able to find solutions to the various challenges we face. Pick your own areas of focus. Contributing to solutions rather than focusing on problems can help us to feel more in control and less vulnerable.
4. Please see the [list of resources](#) available on our website.

I am grateful to be part of the UNM community at this time – with each of us working together to improve the lives for all New Mexicans.

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