

# Message from the OMH Director:

## Following Violence, Helping Communities Heal

President Obama spoke earlier this week about the tragic events that have taken place over the past week and the need for us to do everything we can to support grieving families who have lost loved ones and to help them move forward in a positive and constructive way.

Communities in Baton Rouge, LA, Falcon Heights, MN, and Dallas, TX, among others in the recent past, have been beset by violent and deadly acts that have devastated not just those communities, but our entire nation.

The resulting trauma of these and other events among individuals and families can be widespread and have an impact on mental and physical well-being. And for minority communities, where conditions are often compounded by social determinants of health, such as poor quality education, low-wage jobs, and unsafe neighborhoods, trauma can be even more prevalent. It is not uncommon for individuals and communities as a whole to experience grief and anger, even for those who did not get hurt or lose a loved one. People and communities that are not directly touched by these events also feel the shock and sadness of these occurrences. These are normal reactions. They can last a few months or much longer and can cause symptoms such as anxiety, feeling helpless, and eating or sleeping too much or too little.

The Office of Minority Health has gathered important resources on our website to help communities support emotional well-being and recovery, and we encourage you to share this information with organizations in your community.

If you or someone you know are experiencing emotional distress or need help dealing with these tragedies, you are not alone. Call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746 to get help and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Help is available in more than 150 languages. Go To: <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline>