



News Release

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For Immediate Release

Monday, Dec. 3, 2018

Vegas Strong Resiliency Center Offers Coping Tips for the Holidays

With the holidays approaching, the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center encourages anyone affected by the Route 91 Harvest Festival shooting on 1 October to reach out for emotional and mental health support.

“For those who lost family, friends, or colleagues from the shooting, facing the holidays, anniversaries and other special events without our loved one is very painful,” said Terri Keener, a licensed clinical social worker and Behavioral Health Coordinator at the Resiliency Center. “For those who survived the shooting with or without physical injury, the holidays also can present emotional challenges because you may not feel celebratory or you may feel stress or anxiety doing things that normally wouldn’t bother you such as traveling or being out and about in crowds.”

The Vegas Strong Resiliency Center provides free resources and support to anyone affected by the attack including survivors, family members of victims, responders and those who witnessed the incident or tried to assist victims. Since the center opened in Oct. 2017, it has served more than 8,000 people. Services include victim advocacy and support; legal consultations for civil legal matters such as debt collection, foreclosure, insurance claims, and family law issues; and counseling and spiritual care referrals.

The Resiliency Center is located at 1524 Pinto Lane in Las Vegas. Hours are 10 a.m. Monday-Friday except holidays. It can be reached by phone at (702) 455-2433 (AIDE) or toll-free at (833) 299-2433 and by email at: vegasstrongresiliencycenter@clarkcountynv.gov. Its website address is www.VegasStrongRC.org. It also has a Facebook page at: www.Facebook.com/VegasStrongResiliencyCenter. After hours on weekends or holidays, call the national Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-(800)-985-5990 to talk with a trained crisis counselor. Bridge Counseling also has local therapists available by phone 24/7. Its phone number is: (702) 474-6450.

Mental health professionals stress that people grieve and cope with trauma in different ways, and reminders of 1 October can affect people at different times and in unexpected circumstances such as hearing a particular song, watching news stories about other violent events, or seeing and hearing fireworks on New Year’s Eve. The holidays also may bring up distress symptoms people felt right after a tragedy. General [Coping tips](#) are posted on the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center’s website. Experts also offer these suggestions for dealing with holidays and special anniversaries after enduring trauma from a disaster or tragic incident:

- **Be aware that special days may be difficult and remind you of your losses. Be gentle with yourself.** This is normal and recognizing it as such may help you to not feel crazy and not be so hard on yourself. Treat yourself with the same kindness you give to others.

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- **Participate in rituals that may provide comfort.** Examples include sharing a meal or attending a spiritual service or going to a movie.
- **Plan Activities.** It is likely to be more helpful to plan what you are going to do (and who with) before the special date arrives. Book reservations and invites early so you can avoid disappointment if you can't do what you hoped.
- **Reach out to family and friends.** There is no need to be alone and isolation is not helpful. Invite or accept invitations to participate in rituals, social events or even just to be in the company of another.
- **Talk about your losses with someone who will listen and understand.** Most people have a need to talk about their losses. This is normal and may continue beyond the anniversary and special days.
- **Do things that might help you with overwhelming emotions.** If you like to exercise, take walks, or write in a journal, make sure to do so in the days before and the special days themselves.
- **Do what you would like to do rather than what you think you should do.** Loss is likely to change the way you spend your holidays and other special days. While there may be a desire to keep things the same, trying to do so may make the losses more evident and distressing. Know that you can create new ways to acknowledge and celebrate special days.
- **Know that it is natural to feel sad and/or angry.** You may feel bitter that others seem to be enjoying themselves when you are having a difficult time. Good wishes and holiday greetings may just remind you of your losses. Try not to fight the feelings, but be aware they are likely connected to your losses and may not be aimed at anyone in particular.
- **Draw on your faith and spirituality.** For many, faith is a source of strength and comfort every day and most especially during difficult times. Reach out to your faith advisor and your spiritual community to support and console you.
- **Accept kindness and help from others.** Support makes difficult times more bearable. There is often a tendency to resist help from others. We may believe that we don't need help as much as others, or that we will be a burden to friends or loved ones. Difficult days may be very important times to open up and let others in. Accept their support. Be gracious and allow them the opportunity to share their caring with you.
- **Helping others may actually be a form of helping yourself.** If you are the type of person who gets satisfaction from helping others, you might want to think of small ways that you can be of help to others in need during difficult times. Helping can be as simple as going through your closet to find gently used clothing that might be of use to someone else.

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