



# News Release

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**For Immediate Release**

**Wednesday, June 27, 2018**

## Tips Offered to Help 1 October Survivors Cope With Noise From July 4<sup>th</sup> Fireworks

With the Independence Day holiday approaching, the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center encourages everyone to be considerate with fireworks as part of their July Fourth celebrations. Residents, visitors and responders affected by the shooting on 1 October are also encouraged to be prepared for the potential impact of fireworks and reach out for support.

“Many of those who were at the Route 91 festival have described the onset of the shooting as sounding like fireworks,” said Terri Keener, a licensed clinical social worker and Behavioral Health Coordinator at the Resiliency Center. “Over the July Fourth holiday, the sound of fireworks may be a startling reminder of that night for many survivors. Reactions could cause flashbacks, anxiety, and feelings of embarrassment about these reactions if they occur in front of others.”

Mental health professionals say family and friends can help ease the anxiety of loved ones by providing a supportive presence, anticipating possible reactions to fireworks, and preparing for it. “Some survivors may be reluctant to attend or participate in celebrations, while others may have a desire not to isolate themselves,” said Dr. Megan Freeman, a licensed psychologist with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Child and Family Services. “It’s important to be understanding, supportive and flexible.”

Officials encourage residents to be respectful of neighbors who may be sensitive to noise from fireworks. Prior to igniting fireworks as part of your holiday celebration on the Fourth of July or in the days before, notify your neighbors ahead of time so they can be prepared for the noise. The following suggestions are recommended to help people cope with noise and crowds during Independence Day celebrations:

- Recognize your triggers ahead of time. Talk with family and friends about how you might react or what is worrying to you.
- Make a plan for coping with a reaction. Engage others who support you and communicate to them when you are beginning to feel uncomfortable.
- Use noise cancelling headphones or ear plugs.
- Consider using alternatives to typical fireworks such as sparklers.
- If you are going to a gathering, stay near exits and have a plan for coping with feelings of stress or anxiety that may occur. Try to calmly remove yourself from the situation by taking a short walk, getting a drink of water, or washing your hands.

Additional tips for coping with stress and anxiety include:

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- **Take a time-out.** Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or read. Stepping back from the problem helps clear your head.
- **Eat well-balanced meals.** Do not skip any meals. Do keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
- **Limit alcohol and caffeine,** which can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks.
- **Get enough sleep.** When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest.
- **Be physically active.** Find an activity or sport that you interests you. Even short walks or dancing can help you feel good and maintain your health.
- **Take deep breaths.** Inhale and exhale slowly.
- **Count to 10 slowly.** Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.
- **Try some grounding techniques to connect you to the here and now.** Focus on the details present in your surroundings or on neutral physical sensations. Count something that you notice such as trees, people with hats, or floor tiles. Notice the colors that you see, or the flavors that you taste.
- **Talk to someone.** Let others know when you are feeling overwhelmed and how they can help.
- **Distract yourself.** Use a personal device to listen to audiobooks, podcasts, or music.
- **Connect with others.** Visit a peaceful place or attend a support group. Spend time with someone who you trust and are comfortable with.

A support group for Route 91 survivors and family member meets every Tuesday from 6 pm. to 7 p.m. at Desert Parkway Behavioral Healthcare Hospital, 3247 S. Maryland Pkwy. A group also meets the first Tuesday of the month, 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Nathan Adelson Hospice Center for Compassionate Care, 4131 Swenson St. Both groups are free. Mental health experts say support groups can be helpful for people who are dealing with mass violence because they offer a safe environment for talking about shared experiences and emotions. Survivors are encouraged to contact the Resiliency Center if they have interest in participating in a support group inside or outside the Las Vegas community at (702) 455-2433 (AIDE) or toll-free number at: (833) 299-2433, or by email: [vegasstrongresiliencycenter@clarkcountynv.gov](mailto:vegasstrongresiliencycenter@clarkcountynv.gov). The center's website address is: [www.VegasStrongRC.org](http://www.VegasStrongRC.org). It also has a Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/VegasStrongResiliencyCenter](https://www.facebook.com/VegasStrongResiliencyCenter).

Anyone impacted by 1 October is encouraged to reach out to the Resiliency Center. An online intake form is posted on its website. The center does not have contact information for all who were present at the shooting so survivors are asked to reach out to the center. Names and contact information are *confidential* and will only be used to assist people with services. An application to apply for the Nevada Victims of Crime Program also is posted on the website. Anyone who was present at the concert during the shooting or tried to assist victims the night of the shooting is encouraged to apply for this program by its application deadline of **Oct. 1, 2018**. The program helps pay for out-of-pocket expenses resulting from the crime such as co-pays for counseling or medical bills. Watch our Public Service Announcement on YouTube to learn more: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJ\\_FwT5iR48](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJ_FwT5iR48)

The Vegas Strong Resiliency Center is a free resource and referral hub for anyone who is struggling with the traumatic effects of the 1 October shooting or knows someone who is, including people attending the event, injured in the shooting, their family members, responders and citizens who assisted victims, and bystanders and hotel workers who witnessed the aftermath of the incident. It is important to remember that whether or not there are physical injuries, the trauma of the event itself may have an emotional impact on anyone. Resiliency Center hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. After hours, anyone experiencing emotional distress related to a disaster incident is encouraged to call the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1 (800) 985-5990 or text "TalkWithUs" at 66746. The helpline, managed by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is a multi-lingual resource that provides counseling and support to people 24-hours a day. ###

Clark County is a dynamic and innovative organization dedicated to providing top-quality service with integrity, respect and accountability. With jurisdiction over the world-famous Las Vegas Strip and covering an area the size of New Jersey, Clark is the nation's 14<sup>th</sup>-largest county and provides extensive regional services to more than 2.25 million citizens and 45.5 million visitors a year. Included are the nation's 8<sup>th</sup>-busiest airport, air quality compliance, social services and the state's largest public hospital, University Medical Center. The County also provides municipal services that are traditionally provided by cities to 1 million residents in the unincorporated area. Those include fire protection, roads and other public works, parks and recreation, and planning and development.

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