

Dear Faculty and Staff,

You may already be aware of the shooting that took place on Wednesday, June 17th, at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC. When a tragedy like this occurs, it can elicit a variety of reactions, emotions and concerns.

Please be reminded that our **LifeScope EAP** is available to provide supportive counseling and other services to faculty, staff and their family members who may be directly or indirectly impacted. Resources can be accessed by calling the 24/7 toll-free number - **800-828-6025**, or by logging on to www.LifeScopeEAP.com.

Some things to remember when trying to understand traumatic events:

- * Profound sadness, grief, fear, and anger are normal reactions to an abnormal event
- * Acknowledging our feelings helps us recover
- * Focusing on our strengths and abilities helps us heal
- * Accepting help from community programs and resources is healthy
- * Respect each person's different needs and different ways of coping

In addition, here are some tips that may help you to manage your distress and to feel more positive about your safety and your family's safety:

Manage your own anxiety. Anxiety is a normal response and appropriate in tragic situations. Excessive anxiety, however, can make you less able to think clearly and expends energy needlessly. Ask yourself what specific worries are troubling you most and then seek information to address them. Having that information eliminates the fears created by uncertainty.

Take a break. Minimize your exposure to all types of media, including the Internet. While getting the news informs you, being overexposed to it can augment your distress. Instead, seek out things you enjoy to lift your spirits.

Tune in to how your child is doing. Be supportive and compassionate. If you notice changes in your son or daughter's usual activities, behaviors, or moods, discuss them. He or she may be experiencing distress related to upsetting or tragic events at school.

Provide reassurance. Reassurance is the key to helping children through a traumatic time. Encourage children to express emotions through conversation or creative outlets and to find a way to help others who were affected by the disaster.

Keep to a routine. Try to maintain a normal household or classroom routine and encourage children to participate in recreational activity.

Find perspective. Remember that life's tragedies can occur anywhere--even in your own back yard. Gather strength from knowing that you have been building a strong relationship with your child and that you can be sources of strength for each other through life's inevitable difficulties.

Know when to seek help. Remember that it is common to feel distress after tragic incidents. The strength of these feelings should lessen over time as you gradually replace worry about your son or daughter's safety with more positive thoughts and feelings about the future.

If you feel like you are getting stuck or having difficulty managing intense reactions, professional support can be accessed by calling the **LifeScope** 24/7 toll-free number. It is important to get professional help if you feel that you or your loved ones are unable to function or perform basic activities of daily living.

Your safety and well-being are our top priority.