

Protests + Trauma: Reactions, Resources, + Tips

UVA Department of Student Health and Wellness (SHW)

The recent events happening around Grounds have affected the well-being of many UVA students and the surrounding community. We've seen tensions rise and instances of unrest during protests connected to the loss of life in Gaza and Israel. When unrest occurs on Grounds, it's understandable to feel scared, confused, angry, anxious, sad, and generally overwhelmed.

Student Health and Wellness (SHW) remains committed to supporting the health and well-being of all UVA students. **Counseling and Psychological Services** is a confidential resource for all students seeking assistance.

Although everyone experiences traumatic events differently, some possible symptoms include:

- **Inability to remember parts** of the traumatic event
- **Intrusive, upsetting memories** of the event
- **Flashbacks** (feeling like the event is happening again)
- **Irritability or outbursts of anger**
- **Hypervigilance** (on constant alert)
- **Difficulty falling or staying asleep**
- **Feeling detached** from others and emotionally numb
- **Nightmares**
- **Feeling intense distress** when reminded of the trauma
- **Intense physical reactions** (pounding heart, sweating, nausea)
- **Avoiding activities, places, or thoughts** that remind you of the trauma

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms or would like a safe space to receive support, please reach out to Student Health and Wellness.

Urgent Support

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) On-Call:** Students may call CAPS 24/7 at 434-243-5150 for urgent mental health support. Walk-in hours: Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **TimelyCare's TalkNow** allows students to connect with a mental health professional any time of day, either by phone or video. Students can use TalkNow to discuss any concern, from roommate conflicts, worry about the future or current events, to mental health crises. Download the TimelyCare app to get started.
- **Concerns Regarding a Student:** If you are concerned about a student, call 434-243-5150 24/7 and ask to speak with the on-call counselor. Consultation regarding concerns about students is available to UVA students, faculty, administrators, staff, parents, and other concerned community members.

Ongoing Support

- **Counseling & Psychological Services** offers individual and group therapy, including a trauma group, embedded mental health services in eight UVA Schools, care management for students looking to access care in the community, and psychiatric care.
- **Medical Services** providers offer primary care appointments for management of mild to moderate anxiety or depression, including medication management.
- **TimelyCare's TalkNow** allows students to connect with a mental health professional any time of day, either by phone or video. Students can use TalkNow to discuss any concern, from roommate conflicts, worry about the future or current events, to mental health crises. Download the TimelyCare app to get started.
- **The Collegiate Recovery Program** (CRP) can provide support to those in recovery with regular meetings and events.
- **WahooWell** consists of a confidential well-being survey and two or more confidential, one-on-one meetings with a well-being facilitator.

Protests + Trauma: Reactions, Resources, + Tips

UVA Department of Student Health and Wellness (SHW)

Follow-up Support

Trauma reactions may not surface until days, weeks, months, or sometimes years following a traumatic event. Sometimes, current stressors can activate memories of past traumas or stressors.

- **CAPS** can be accessed throughout the academic year and summer. CAPS provides individual, group and crisis services, care management for students looking to access care in the community, and psychiatric services to all eligible UVA students.
- **TimelyCare's TalkNow** allows students to connect with a mental health professional any time of day, either by phone or video. Students can use TalkNow to discuss any concern, from roommate conflicts, worry about the future or current events, to mental health crises. Staff are happy to assist 24/7. Download the TimelyCare app to get started.
- **TimelyCare's Self-Care Journeys** nurture students health and well-being. From yoga sessions to audio meditations, these assets help manage everyday struggles. Look for interactive content on topics like: Strategies for Stressful Situations, Grounding Techniques You Can Use Anywhere, Anxiety Relief Tips, and Observing Snowballing Reactions.
- **Well-being at SHW** flourishing academically goes hand-in-hand with nurturing your overall well-being, and SHW is committed to providing you with the resources and support you need to thrive in all aspects of your life.

Looking for additional support?

Sometimes students have needs outside of mental and emotional health, and can benefit from speaking with **Care and Support Services** (CASS). CASS provides inclusive, non-clinical support to increase students' ability to identify, reduce, and navigate barriers to their growth and well-being. CASS can help connect students to additional appropriate resources on Grounds and beyond.

Contact CASS at 434-924-7133, cass@virginia.edu, or by walking in to their office on the second floor of Peabody Hall.

Suggestions for Coping with Trauma

- Avoid making big decisions
- Practice meditation and relaxation techniques multiple times per day, not just when you are feeling anxious
- If relaxation exercises increase your anxiety, consider using grounding techniques (e.g., describing the environment around you, say a safety statement to yourself to remind yourself that you are safe, say the alphabet very slowly or backwards as a distraction, run water over your hands, stretch, walk slowly, picture people you care about, say a coping statement like, "I can get through this.")
- Educate yourself about common reactions to trauma so that you know that you are not alone
- Seek out support and talk openly with people you feel safe with
- Avoid using food, alcohol, drugs or excessive exercise to numb yourself; instead reach out to safe and trusted people
- Get moderate amounts of exercise daily
- Seek out spiritual or religious resources
- Distract yourself with positive activities (listen to music, write, draw, spend time outside)
- When you have intrusive memories, remind yourself that they are memories and that the trauma is not happening right now
- Remind yourself that reactions are normal and usually lessen with time
- Connect with people that have had similar experiences
- If media is triggering your anxiety, consider limiting your access