

## **Important Considerations in Helping Others**

### **Enhance Access to Primary Support System**

An immediate concern for most affected persons is being able to communicate with individuals with whom they have a primary relationship (e.g., spouse/partner, children, parents, other family members, close friends, clergy), and social support can play a strong role in recovery from a traumatic event. Therefore, a critical objective of intervention efforts is to take practical steps to encourage/enable the person to make contact (in person, by phone, by e-mail) with individuals for whom the person feels the greatest concern (e.g., a worried parent) or the greatest need to be with right now.

### **Reluctance to Seek Support**

At times, a survivor of a traumatic event may be unwilling to accept support and assistance, even when a need for these is clear and present. Possible reasons for this reluctance which may provide opportunities for corrective intervention include:

- Not knowing what they need (and perhaps feeling that they should know)
- Feeling embarrassed or weak because of needing help
- Feeling guilty about receiving help when other are in greater need
- Not knowing where to turn for help when everyone else also needs help
- Worrying that they will be a burden or depress others
- Fearing that they will get so upset that they'll lose control
- Doubting that it will be helpful
- Preferring to avoiding thinking or having feeling about what happened
- Telling themselves that "no one can understand what I'm going through"
- Having tried to get help and felt that help wasn't there (feeling let down or betrayed)
- Fearing the people they ask will be angry at them or make them feel guilty for needing help

### **Statements to Avoid**

- I know how you feel.
- It was probably for the best.
- S/he is better off now.
- Let's talk about something else.
- You should work towards getting over this.
- You are strong enough to deal with this.
- You should be glad s/he passed quickly.
- You'll feel better soon.
- You did everything you could.
- You need to grieve.

- It's good that you are alive.
- It's good that no one else died

If problems persist, seek professional assistance. If you are having difficulty managing intense reactions and/or functioning in your daily activities, contact the Counseling Center (Trinity East Annex, 508-849-3308), describe the situation, and ask for an emergency appointment. After hours, call Paxton Police at 508-494-9010