NASP Offers Resources Related to the One-Year Anniversary of the Uvalde Tragedy

Bethesda, MD—The anniversary of an act of mass violence, like the shootings at Uvalde Elementary School a year ago, can be both a painful reminder of the horror and heartbreak experienced by the community and a time to spotlight the resilience and steps toward recovery of those directly affected. It is important to remember that recovery is often a lengthy journey, not a moment in time, and members of the Uvalde community will continue to need space, time, and support as they move forward.

Anniversaries of high-profile acts of violence like this also offer the opportunity to reinforce school safety awareness and to be attentive to students who may be triggered by renewed attention to the tragedy. While this is particularly true in communities that have experienced a traumatic event, intense media coverage can make the pain and sense of risk relevant almost anywhere. NASP offers guidance for educators on navigating anniversaries of traumatic events. Following are three additional considerations.

1. **What we say about school safety matters.** Adults may struggle with the growing reality of mass violence in the United States, particularly gun violence. However, caregivers and school personnel have a responsibility to help children and youth feel safe by establishing a sense of normalcy and security, reinforcing their natural resilience, and talking with them about their fears. The perception that schools are unsafe is on the rise, yet in reality, schools remain among the safest places for children and youth. Although there is no absolute guarantee that something bad will never happen, it is important to reinforce the difference between the possibility of something happening and the probability that it will affect any individual or school community. NASP has updated guidance on [Talking to Children About Violence](https://www.nasponline.org/safe-schools/).

2. **Efforts to reinforce safety should include a focus on ensuring psychological safety.** The impetus to do anything possible to keep school safe is understandably strong. However, overemphasis on hardening schools and intensive or frequent armed assailant drills can contribute unnecessarily to a sense of risk and trauma. School leaders need to make decisions based on the needs of their school community, and understanding key considerations is critical. These three resources from NASP may be helpful in this process: [Best Practice Considerations for Armed Assailant Drills in Schools](https://www.nasponline.org/safe-schools/), [Mitigating the Psychological Effects of Lockdown Drills](https://www.nasponline.org/safe-schools/), and [Conducting Crisis Exercises and Drills: Guidelines for Schools](https://www.nasponline.org/safe-schools/).

3. **Genuine school safety starts with creating a positive, supportive, and inclusive school climate.** This includes school-wide efforts to promote student wellness and resilience, supporting students’ social–emotional learning, providing positive behavioral supports, implementing positive discipline policies, facilitating genuine family engagement, and improving access to the school mental health services. No single strategy or program will create a safe school, and effective efforts require collaboration among administrators, teachers, school psychologists, other school mental health professionals, school resource officers, parents, students, and community agencies. Get more detailed guidance on comprehensive school safety measures in NASP’s [Framework for Safe and Successful Schools](https://www.nasponline.org/safe-schools/).