

## Helpful Tips – Public Tragedies and Disasters

### For hospices and other healthcare organizations



1. Assess the situation. What has happened? Who needs help? What kind of help?
2. Recognize victims of tragedies may be in shock from the sudden event and losses. They may be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the events and not know what to do and how to begin coping with it.
3. Recognize such victims may also be your co-workers.
4. Victims may suffer loss on multiple levels: loss of home, car, clothing, sense of community, neighborhood, friends and family members, pets, special events (weddings, graduations, parties,), jobs, security, etc.
5. Evaluate internal resources. What do you have to offer that will help those most in need? What are your limitations? What other organizations or individuals do you know that can also help?
6. Prioritize responses. What is the most urgent need that your organization can meet? Develop a list of which things need to be done, and then assign people or organizations to take immediate action.
7. What special resources are available to your organization that can be helpful to this tragedy? Dieticians? Extra beds or sleeping space for folks who need it? Shelter from the elements?
8. How can your volunteers help? For example, does your organization have a list of willing 4X4 drivers? Blood donors? Folks trained in CPR? Pet-sitters? Volunteers skilled in carpentry, plumbing, roofing, electrical work, etc.?
9. What organizational counseling services are available? Phone counseling? Office visits, home visits, community informational sessions, etc.? 24-hour counseling phone line?
10. How can your organization meet the needs of children at this time? Offer support of art therapists, play therapists and music therapists.
11. Get the word out. Tell others about the support and services you are offering.