TO: Oberlin Community

FROM: Department of Human Resources

DATE: May 25, 2022

SUBJECT: Response to Uvalde, Texas tragedy

Tragic events like the school shooting that took place in Uvalde, Texas yesterday, or the grocery store shooting in Buffalo, New York, that took place a couple weeks earlier, can lead to intense feelings of grief and anger in adults, children, and across entire communities. Grief does not just occur at the loss of a loved one but can also be caused by a loss of safety, security, trust, and stability. Societal violence can lead to trauma responses not only in those directly affected by the violence but also by those indirectly affected and geographically removed from the tragedy.

There is no time limit on grief and everyone experiences grief in their own way. How folks experience grief may be affected by their age, their culture, their family, social supports, and their lived experiences. One of the ways to help adults experiencing grief is to allow them the opportunity to express themselves freely and to support them in seeking help, when needed or wanted. Children, too, need to be able to freely express themselves and also need structure, strong family, social support, and healthy sleeping and eating patterns.

We encourage any of the members of our campus community to explore some of the virtual-handouts regarding what grief can sometimes look like, how to provide support to someone who is grieving, and what healthy activities a person can focus on while grieving. HR has also included a very helpful two-page information sheet from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) on Coping with Grief after Community Violence. These will be posted on the HR website.

As many employees within our Oberlin community have children, take note of the article entitled "Helping Children with Tragic Events in the News" from PBS and Fred Rogers Productions that includes ways to address this subject with children and ways to support children through this confusing and scary time: https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/helping-children-with-tragic-events-in-the-news.

As always, the Cleveland Clinic's Lifestyle EAP is an Oberlin resource ready to help our employees with in-the-moment support available 24-hours a day and access to in-person or virtual counseling with a counselor who best meets their needs. They can be reached at 800-989-3277.

For additional information or guidance, please contact the Department of Human Resources at 5-8430 or human.resources@oberlin.edu.