



The
Jewish
Board

Coping After a Crisis on Campus

JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Experiencing a campus shooting or serious crisis can shake your sense of safety, focus, and routine. Being away from campus or preparing to return can make things feel even more unsettled.

There is no “right” way to respond. What you’re experiencing makes sense.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BODY AFTER TRAUMA

After a life-threatening or frightening event, the body’s survival system activates automatically. This response is biological, not intentional.

Common **acute stress reactions** include:

- Feeling on edge, easily startled, or irritable
- Trouble sleeping, fatigue, or racing thoughts
- Emotional numbness or intense waves of fear, sadness, anger, or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating or feeling disconnected
- Wanting closeness one moment and distance the next

These reactions are **normal responses to abnormal events**. They reflect a nervous system working to protect you, not weakness or failure.

WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF RIGHT NOW

Small, steady actions help your nervous system settle:

- Eat regularly, even if your appetite is low
- Sleep when you can; changes in sleep are common
- Limit repeated exposure to distressing news or social media
- Move your body gently (walking, stretching, breathing)
- Keep some structure to your day, even if it’s minimal
- Stay connected in ways that feel supportive; texting counts

You don’t need to do everything. One or two can make a difference!

We’re Here to Help

Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or just in need of someone to talk to? The Jewish Community Services team is here for you.

We offer supportive one-on-one conversations, crisis intervention, listening circles, and resources to help you care for yourself through difficult moments.

Please reach out to us by emailing JCSsupport@jbfcs.org.

GROUNDING STRATEGIES FOR RETURNING TO CAMPUS

Returning to campus can reactivate stress, even if you feel ready. Grounding helps bring your body back to the present.

Examples include:

- Noticing **five things you can see, four you can feel, three you can hear**
- Pressing your feet into the floor and taking slow breaths
- Carrying a small object that feels familiar or comforting
- Taking brief breaks between classes or activities
- Identifying “safe” or familiar spaces on campus ahead of time

Coping statements you can try:

- “I’m safe right now.”
- “This feeling will rise and fall.”
- “I’ve handled hard things before.”
- “I can take this one step at a time.”

WHY RETURNING CAN BE EMPOWERING

Going back isn’t about forcing yourself to be okay. For many students, it’s about:

- Reclaiming routines, spaces, and connections
- Regaining a sense of choice and control
- Reducing avoidance, which can strengthen fear over time
- Reconnecting with community and support

It’s okay if empowerment comes gradually or differently than you expect.

RECONNECTING TO YOUR SUPPORTS

Stress can make it hard to remember what’s available to you.

Support may include:

- Friends, roommates, family members
- Professors, advisors, or campus staff
- Counseling, health, or wellness services
- Cultural, religious, or identity-based communities

Reaching out is a skill – not a sign that you’re not coping.

WHEN MORE SUPPORT MAY BE NEEDED

Consider getting additional support if you notice:

- Symptoms that don’t ease or get worse over time
- Ongoing trouble sleeping, attending class, or functioning
- Panic attacks, intense withdrawal, or loss of hope
- Thoughts about not wanting to be here or feeling unsafe

If you are in immediate distress, call or text **988** or contact emergency services

Returning to Campus Toolkit

- Choose a safe space
- Plan short breaks
- Move your body between classes
- Carry a grounding object
- Limit news during the day

When stress spikes, try:

- Slow your breathing
- Feel your feet on the ground
- Repeat: “I can take this one step at a time.”



A Final Reminder

Resilience doesn’t mean feeling fine. It means adapting, finding support, and continuing forward, even when it’s hard. For questions or support, contact us at **JCSsupport@jbfcs.org**.