



NALGAP's Statement on the Pulse Nightclub massacre in Orlando Florida

The Board of Directors of NALGAP, The Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Addiction Professionals and Their Allies, wishes to express its deepest condolences to family and friends of those killed or injured in the senseless attacks in Orlando, Florida.

As most of us were just waking up on Sunday morning, June 12, 2016, we heard of the tragedy that had occurred. Those in the Orlando area most directly affected will need a lot of support. We also wish to remind our colleagues and fellow addiction professionals of the devastating impact of trauma on many of our clients; specifically, many of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Gender Non-Confirming Clients will be profoundly affected. Interpersonal Violence and Community Trauma is unfortunately all too familiar to LGBTQ Individuals as well as our Allies, families and friends. We are reminded that a gay nightclub like Pulse in Orlando is not just a bar. For many it was a sanctuary, a place to find community, to find others like yourself, to discover you are not the only one. This connecting can be experienced by many, and for persons in early recovery, the connection can be very strong. Clients will experience a range of emotions following this tragedy. As addiction professionals, we have become increasingly aware of the impact of trauma for individuals affected by addictions. We have been moved to the understanding that without trauma-informed care many clients will not be able to sustain recovery. The principles of a trauma-informed approach and trauma-specific interventions have become necessary in assisting our clients to heal. Following the tragedy in Orlando we need to be prepared to address the traumatic stress and unhealed wounds that will be experienced by our clients in the days, weeks and months to come.

We also need to be mindful of the affect this tragedy will have on our fellow NALGAP members; LGBTQ Addiction Professionals and our allies can also experience vicarious trauma during this difficult time. We need to create space that is safe for all to heal.

This is now the worst terrorist attack that has occurred in the United States since 9/11. As with other traumatic incidents, we often look to assign blame. While the shooter is accountable for his actions, far too often LGBT individuals can fall victim to self-blame, a belief that because of who they love and how they live, violence is to be expected. We need to be mindful of how damaging heterosexism can be.

NALGAP is here to offer our support to others. We will provide resources for others. Many of our board members are trained trauma counselors and are available to offer assistance. Together we will heal. Together we will stand strong. Together we will get through this. NALGAP has been there for the LGBT community since 1979, and we will continue our efforts to advocate for the health, safety and wellbeing of all.

Self care Tips

Take care of yourself: you owe it to yourself and those who care about you.

Get enough rest: even when the work demands are high: you are NOT superman/woman.

You need to set limits.

Eat and drink healthily and regularly.

Monitor your alcohol and tobacco intake: these substances may help you cope in the short term, but in the long run they reduce your body's ability to deal with stress. *Counselors who are in recovery need to be mindful that relapse can occur. Stay close to your recovery support; if the thought of drinking or using occurs, find a trusted friend to share it with. If you need to step away from the work you are doing, then do that. Don't judge yourself. Allow yourself to get help if needed.*

Exercise, even if it's just a walk or sit-ups. Exercise will help you work off stress you've been under, and help you to be in better shape to deal with the stress to come.

Communicate and share your feelings; talk to a colleague you trust, e-mail or phone a friend, write about or draw what you're feeling. Make an agreement with a buddy for mutual support.

Review how you're coping; check with others for an objective view.

Quiet time: take time to meditate, pray, listen to music, focus on the beauty that is always a part of life. You do have coping skills already. Use whatever it is that works best for you!

These tips really do work and will help you to do what you're doing well, and keep on being able to do it well.

Adapted from The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.