



To Whom It May Concern:

The recent steam pipe explosion on July 18th may leave your employees or building residents feeling, frightened, confused and insecure. The explosion may also bring back painful memories of 9/11. These are normal reactions to an abnormal event.

In the aftermath of a traumatic event, those exposed may experience stress-related symptoms, such as feeling angry, having headaches or being suspicious and nervous. These symptoms can affect the normal functioning of the body as well as the mind. For most people, these symptoms are short lived and may disappear in a few weeks.

By providing your building residents or employees with information regarding reactions to traumatic events, and how to get help if needed, you can help them cope more effectively. Attached to this letter are two information sheets that we recommend you distribute to all your building residents and employees:

1. How People React to Traumatic Events
2. Helping Your Family; After Exposure to Disasters and Other Traumatic Events

These sheets are also available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/mhdpr/mhdpr-fact.shtml>. For further resources regarding coping during times of trauma visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/mhdpr/mhdpr_res.shtml. Additionally, we recommend that businesses contact their internal Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to enquire what crisis services are available for their employees.

If you or someone you know is still suffering from symptoms of stress one month after witnessing the event, consider seeking professional help. Referrals for mental health services may be accessed by employees through their health care insurance, their company's EAP or by calling 1-800 LIFENET (1-800 543 3638) a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week crisis hotline. Lifenet staff are mental health professionals who speak a variety of languages.

Thank you for your assistance in sharing this information within your building and business community. If you need further information regarding the mental health impact of traumatic events, please contact the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Office of Mental Health Disaster Preparedness and Response at (212) 219-5500.

Sincerely,

Jorge Petit MD
Associate Commissioner
Division of Mental Hygiene

Gail Wolsk
Director
Office of Mental Health Disaster
Preparedness and Response