

Script – Broadcast – Coping with trauma during the holidays

Intro

The holidays are typically a time for joy and celebration with loved ones. But for some survivors of violent crime, the holidays can also be filled with stress, anxiety and memories of not-so happy times.

Therasa Yehling is the manager of the OSF Strive Trauma Recovery Center at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford. She says those side effects include anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after a trauma such as gun violence, assaults, domestic violence, human trafficking and armed violence or robbery in which they are the victim or witness.

The events causing the trauma could have occurred two weeks ago or 10 years ago. There is no expiration date on the grief that happens as a result of violent crime, Yehling adds.

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Therasa Yehling, manager of the OSF Strive Trauma Recovery Center at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford

“When we talk to people, we try to get a full picture of the trauma in their lifetime. We’re finding that some people have had a lot of trauma starting in their childhood all the way up. Really then, a new traumatic event can stir up all the old stuff that maybe we’ve never dealt with, and the symptoms of trauma have rendered that person almost catatonic, and they can’t function.”

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Yehling offers several basic tips for violent crime survivors during the holidays.

- Trust your grief and your healing
- Experience the grief and don’t run from it
- Say no to things that make you uncomfortable and form healthy boundaries
- Create new traditions
- Make a list of things you’re grateful for this year
- Do something kind for someone else

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If none of those things seem to help or if these feelings are interrupting daily activities Yehling says it’s time to seek professional help as soon as possible. She does warn that seeking support will also mean doing a deep dive into what’s causing your feelings.