

## 2-1-1 Big Bend provides support network after trauma

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Feelings of anger, sadness, and grief swept through Tallahassee and surrounding areas following the tragic shooting that occurred this month. As these feelings remain very present in the Tallahassee community and will for some time, many members have come together to show support, to connect, and feel a greater sense of community.

“Some of our [2-1-1] callers are feeling helpless and unsafe due to the [Hurricane Michael] storm and recent violence.

Because of the storm, many people lost their homes, belongings, even loved ones, and they are still picking up the pieces to their lives. Community members were just starting to feel secure again, but with the recent Yoga studio shooting, they are reeling,” commented Paulina Lewis, 2-1-1 Big Bend Outreach and Education Coordinator. “We [2-1-1] are working hard to bring people and resources together to strengthen community ties and help those who need it,” Lewis said.

During and after a tragedy of this magnitude, mental health and self-care are vital for every individual, no matter the level of impact. 2-1-1 hotline counselors share that while callers frequently utilize the free, 24/7

hotline service for information and referrals, a large portion of callers just need to talk with someone.

They need help navigating the maze of emotions that arise from tragic events in their lives or the lives of their loved ones. Lewis said, “At 2-1-1, we provide short-term crisis counseling, information and referrals. That means that while we [trained hotline counselors] are talking to you on the phone, we will discuss what you are going through, help process your emotions with you, and we also provide information and referrals to agencies in the area that you may need.”

Help does not stop there. In partnership with the FSU College of Medicine and the United Way of the Big Bend, 21-1 Big Bend’s Mental Health Navigator is available to assist callers in finding care for any mental health needs. “After talking with a hotline counselor initially, a caller can get connected with the Mental Health Navigator to receive more specific follow-up on types of mental health therapists available to them. If the caller is unable to get connected to these resources, the Mental Health Navigator helps identify and address any barriers to receiving care.”

2-1-1 hotline counselors and staff want community members to know We Are

Here. We are here most importantly to listen and to help you process your emotions. We want all members of the Big Bend region to know it is safe to reach out for help, no matter what you may be experiencing. Mental health does matter. You matter.

Individuals and families seeking information or support in Leon, Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Wakulla counties can dial 21-1 or (850)-617-NEED (6333) for immediate assistance. More information, including our online referral database, about 2-1-1 Big Bend can be found <https://www.211bigbend.org>