



*My View*

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AFTERMATH

A recent article in the New York Times reports that a growing body of scientific research indicates that how survivors are treated in the aftermath of traumatic events is crucial to their recovery. The following three statements from the article summarize the research...

- > *"A significant body of work suggests that the environment just after the event, particularly other people's responses, may be just as crucial as the event itself."* Paul Plotsky (Emory U) / Dr Brandon Kohrt (George Wash U)
- > *"There is no trauma to alleviate until the post event environment plays its role."* Carol Riff, psychologist at the U of Washington.
- > We can't undo bad things that happen, but we can reshape the environment that exists in its wake.

This research is good news for TIP. It reinforces our belief that the intervention of TIP Volunteers on scene is not only the right thing to do immediately, but it directly impacts the long term recovery process of survivors.

How specifically does TIP play a part in creating supportive environments for survivors in the wake of tragedy? There are at least 4 ways...

- > By providing Emotional First Aid, TIP Volunteers create an immediate supportive environment that ensures "second injuries" don't occur. The TIP Volunteer's presence conveys to the survivor *"The community acknowledges your plight, and we are behind you. You are not alone"*.
- > TIP Volunteers provide survivors information about supportive services in the community. TIP Volunteers ensure that survivors find supportive services more quickly than they could on their own.
- > TIP Volunteers educate members of the survivor's support system who are on the scene (family/friends/ neighbors) about how they can be supportive to the survivor in the aftermath.
- > Through Emotional First Aid Training and the [www.whentragedystrikes.org](http://www.whentragedystrikes.org) website, TIP educates community members about how to provide the supportive social environment that survivors need.

In summary, TIP Volunteers **immediately** establish a supportive environment for survivors (exactly what research says is needed for healing). Also Volunteers through the TIP Resource Guide ensure that survivors connect with supportive services in the community. And finally, our organization through our ongoing education programs educates community members about how to be supportive to survivors in the aftermath of trauma.

There are many organizations and individuals in communities who play a role in establishing supportive environments for survivors. By ensuring that the **immediate** environment is supportive, TIP plays a key role in ensuring that a potentially chaotic and possibly non supportive on scene environment is one which conveys to survivors *"we here for you and we care."*

My hope is that this new research will find its way into our grant writing and our group presentations. These findings add credibility to our claims that what we do has a lasting impact on survivors and contributes to their ability to recover.

For copies of the NY Times article email a request to Wayne at [Tipincceo@aol.com](mailto:Tipincceo@aol.com)

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