In response to the recent shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, The Ohio Psychological Association expresses our deepest concern and sympathy to those directly and indirectly affected by this senseless act of hate. We stand in unity with our neighboring state, the Pennsylvania Psychological Association and with the Jewish community at large. We condemn acts of hatred, gun violence, and crimes related to religious extremism and prejudice.

What can we do about this kind of violence? It may seem easiest to feel helpless or to despair. However, as psychologists, there is much good we can do. To quote Dr. Ruth Fassinger, President of APA Division 17:

Let us renew our resolve to use our words—our knowledge, our ability to listen and talk and help people heal—to repair the world, or in Hebrew, tikkun olam, in a fitting tribute to our Jewish brothers and sisters. Tikkun olam requires us to open our hearts and minds to the grief and pain of others, and to reach out in community and to bond in humanity as we challenge hate wherever we find it, using all of the tools we have, personally and professionally.

One psychologist friend of mine in Pittsburgh helped her neighbors stay safe as they sheltered near the synagogue in a coffee shop during the lock down. Each of us may know someone affected or may feel the echoes of prior traumas as we read of these events. Traumatic events such as these can often lead to symptoms related to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and an increase in safety concerns. If you or anyone you know is experiencing distress as it relates this tragic event, or if you need professional assistance to support a child who has been affected by this event, please seek out a mental health professional.

As you care for yourself, your clients, and others this week, know that we are together in our efforts to help repair the world.

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The Ohio Psychological Association, in Columbus, Ohio, is membership organization of approximately 1,500 Ohio psychologists. Its mission is to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting human welfare. For more information or for a psychologist referral, visit www.ohpsych.org.