

# THE RIVERSIDE TRAUMA CENTER NEWSLETTER

## Trauma Center Responds to Crises in its First Year

Last year, Riverside’s work helping a community respond to several adolescent suicides came to the attention of the Massachusetts Legislature. Recognizing the importance of the work our clinical staff was providing as well our responses to many other situations over many years, the Legislature approved funding for a designated Trauma Center to serve the approximately 70 communities in Riverside’s service area. The funding, which comes through the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, enables Riverside to provide disaster mental health services following a traumatic event, to provide on-going training to our staff, and to provide training to communities and agencies that would like to learn skills to support the emotional needs of individuals following a tragedy. The Riverside Trauma Center was officially launched in September 2006. Since the launch of the program, Riverside has responded to a wide range of situations, including helping people affected by the explosion in Danvers last fall, helping a south-

west suburban community cope with the sudden death of a middle school student, helping students and communities respond to youth suicides and attempted suicides in several settings and, most recently, supporting individuals,



*Uxbridge firefighters helping contain the mill fire*

business owners and employees affected by a devastating fire in Uxbridge. Riverside staff spent a week in Uxbridge at the Recovery Center set up by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), providing support to the town’s Community Emergency Response Team, “psychological first aid” to suddenly unemployed workers and distraught business owners, and offering mental health screenings as needed.

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Photo courtesy of Blackstonedaily.com

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## Upcoming Community Training

Riverside Trauma Center is offering a training for people interested in learning the skills needed to assist individuals and groups following traumatic events. Based on research and best practices in the field, the training focuses on providing “Psychological First Aid.” Presenters include Robert Macy, Ph.D., Director of the Boston Center for Trauma Psychology, internationally recognized for his work in disaster response, and staff of the Riverside Trauma Center, including Lawrence Berkowitz, Ed.D., Director.

The training is free and open to anyone who might use these skills in their work setting, or who would like to serve as a community volunteer to support the work of the Center in community responses. For more information or to register for the training, contact Larry Berkowitz at:

[Lberkowitz@riversidecc.org](mailto:Lberkowitz@riversidecc.org) or by calling 888-851-2451.

### Administering Psychological First Aid: What You Need to Know

**October 22, 2007**  
**9:30 am – 4:00 pm**  
**Wellesley Free Library**

## A History of Riverside Trauma Services

In keeping with our mission to build healthy communities by supporting the needs of citizens within our service areas, Riverside Community Care has a long history of providing emotional support to individuals, communities, businesses and organizations following traumatic events. Examples of our previous involvement include: supporting employees of a business in the Blackstone Valley following a robbery and hostage-taking incident, helping the Wakefield community respond to the shootings at Edgewater Technologies in 2000, providing support following the tragic bus accident that affected the Oak Hill Middle School community in Newton, and assisting at Logan Airport following the horrifying terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001.

In 2003, Riverside developed a Critical Incident Team to formally respond to the needs of our communities and to support staff and the people we serve in Riverside's programs following accidents and unexpected deaths.

## How Can the Riverside Trauma Center Help You?

Trauma Center Staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist in the event of a "critical incident"- a homicide, suicide, or other sudden, unexpected death or disturbing incident that affects a school, community or organization; a large scale accident or fire, or a natural disaster. **Contact us by calling our 24 hour response line at:**

**1-888-851-2451**

When calling, ask to speak with a **Trauma Center manager**—we will provide immediate assessment, consultation or support, as needed. Specialized training and consultation is also available to meet the specific needs of a school or other organization.

## Add Your Name to our Email List

To receive copies of our newsletter by email, announcements of upcoming trainings and events, and other pertinent information, send an email to: [lberkowitz@riversidecc.org](mailto:lberkowitz@riversidecc.org) and write: "Trauma Center Email list" in the subject line.

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## Resources Available on the Internet

Hopefully, most of us will never deal directly with the effects of a disaster. However, this time of year brings reminders of the sixth anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001 as well as the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Many good articles and resources are available on the internet to help individuals and families learn about typical reactions to traumatic situations, and to learn coping strategies for dealing with the challenges brought by disasters and the reactions that anniversaries bring. The following are a few useful resources :

- Guidelines for Coping with the Anniversary of a Trauma or Death, from the New York University Child Study Center:  
[http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/copi\\_anni.html](http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/copi_anni.html)
- A collection of articles on coping with disasters and the role of resilience is available from the American Psychological Association's Help Center at:  
<http://apahelpcenter.org/articles/topic.php?id=4>

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# Riverside Community Care

THE HELP YOU NEED CLOSE TO HOME

888-851-2451

[www.riversidecc.org](http://www.riversidecc.org)