

- Family volunteers contributed 2.6% of household income compared to 1.9% by non-family volunteers.
- Top three areas where family volunteers gave time were informal volunteering on an ad hoc basis (50%), volunteering with religious organizations (50%), youth development (41%). (Respondents could choose more than one area.)
- When families do volunteer they do so for longer periods of time and more regularly than other volunteers.

Survey “confirms our observations that while families are busier than ever, they are still looking for ways to spend time together, teach important values, and share the experience of helping others,” notes Sara Meléndez, IS pres. Family volunteering provides opportunities for children to become involved in volunteering at an early age, which most often translates to them volunteering as adults.

RESEARCH PROVES FAMILY VOLUNTEERING IS GOOD FOR CORPORATIONS, TOO

Target Stores and Points of Light Fdn, in collaboration with The Conference Board, undertook a 3-year study

examining 1) participants’ perceptions of the value of including family members in corporate volunteer projects and 2) how to successfully manage such a volunteer effort. Good Neighbor Captains (GNCs) – usually mid-level managers – recruited volunteer teams, led volunteer efforts and encouraged participation at more than 400 Target Stores. Results from the study found:

- 75% of GNCs surveyed said **participation improves employee morale.** Other benefits include positive attitude in the workplace; stronger commitment to the employer; greater ability to break down barriers in the workplace; enhanced skills such as team-building, problem-solving and leadership.
- 90% reported participation is **beneficial to team members:** providing quality time and promoting family cohesion; giving children a positive role model; instilling a spirit of volunteerism; increasing feelings of well-being caused by helping others; offering learning opportunities.
- 90+% believe the project **improved Target’s image in the community** by showing the company has a “personal side.” Managers, volunteers and service agency personnel suggest the effort gave Target a competitive advantage through customer and employee loyalty and attracting new customers. (More from The Conference Board, 845 Third Ave, NYC 10022-6679; 212/759-0900)

Ways To Increase Family Volunteering:

1. **Ask.** It’s one of the most effective ways to get people involved. When asked, over 85% will say yes.
2. **Provide appropriate activities** for various age groups and offer flexible times and arrangements to enable families to participate.
3. **Explain** the specific tasks involved to reduce any apprehension about participating.
4. **Encourage** people to bring a family member and describe the possible benefits they can gain from the experience.
5. **Connect** your organization with the membership of a religious or service group – where you can tap a great resource for family volunteers. People who participate in these groups are more likely to actively volunteer.
6. **Show real results** of how families are making a difference in your organization. This keeps them committed and motivated. (More from IS at 888/860-8118 www.IndependentSector.org)

MANAGING TRAUMA IN THE WORKPLACE: COUNSELORS AGREE THAT A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH IS VITAL TO RECOVERY

During times of wide-scale trauma and loss, it’s a good idea for practitioners to apply some basic principles that can help restore a sense of emotional balance and security to employees. In the wake of the attacks, especially, employees are feeling myriad emotions, and are often dealing with upset family members. According to clinical grief counselor John “Shep” Jeffreys (Columbia, MD), what businesses are witnessing is not necessarily “post traumatic stress disorder,” because there’s nothing “post” about it. “We’re still in the trauma,” he told prr. “We have to be careful about how we use that term,” he says, noting that members of the media are misusing it. Most people, he says, are experiencing shock, disbelief, anxiety and fear. “There’s nothing wrong with that – it’s completely normal.” Some real ways these can manifest in the workplace – among execs and staff alike – include:

1. **Generalized anxiety** about various matters unrelated to the incident – for example, heightened nervousness about illness, visits to the dentist, etc.
2. **Specific fears**, e.g., fear of working in tall buildings, fear of being near federal buildings, fear of sirens, fear of flying, etc.
3. **Despair** and feelings of hopelessness, as if nothing really matters anymore.
4. **Concern over business loss.** “It’s not just fear that someone will blow up their business, but that they will lose their business.” In DC, the effects are evident. Empty restaurants, empty hotels, empty theaters. “People don’t want to gather in public places.” Naturally, employers in all industries are waiting for the ramifications.
5. **Disorientation.** Suddenly, certain contracts might be gone, Websites may no longer exist, companies may have lost their offices and have to relocate.
6. **Grief.** “Some people have family members, friends, clients and associates who’ve been atomized.” For others, he notes, the loss of upwards of 6,000 people is compounded by the sight of the smoking New York City skyline, suddenly void of the familiar Twin Towers, or the scene of the scorched, gutted Pentagon, a building which symbolized strength and stability. “When you lose that which is familiar, you grieve,” Jeffreys notes.

“The way management acts is a significant part of the recovery process,” says Larry Bergmann of Post Trauma Resources (Columbia, SC). “Most employers who have not been traumatized may not be aware of the recovery needed by those who have been traumatized. It’s up to the trauma response team to provide companies with the guidelines.”

DON’T COMPOUND THE PROBLEM

It’s important that employers don’t add to the problem by acting inappropriately, according to Larry Bergmann, pres., Post Trauma Resources (Columbia, SC). “They could cause secondary injury,” he told prr. “The actions a company takes can either help heal – or make the damage



worse.” Some bad ideas, for example, might include: a) not letting people attend funerals; b) expecting people to jump right back in the saddle, crank productivity; c) inadvertently raising anxieties – if, for instance, a displaced company from one of the Twin Towers decided to move its business to the top of a nearby skyscraper.

ISSUES FOR EMPLOYERS TO CONSIDER

to bear for human beings to recover,” says Jeffreys. “Having a routine is very healing, as is having a structure.” Also, many people who have to act stoical in front of children at home are looking to the workplace as an environment where they can unload around adults. “Employers need to help employees move through this expected period of grief, which everyone does in their own way and at their own pace.” Relative to helping their employees, management should consider:

- **Clinical Services.** According to Bergmann, these would include seminars for management and staff, group counseling, having employees visit a counseling center, in some cases referrals for private doctors who can dispense medication. “A good response will not just focus on the employees but also on their families, their children. A good workshop may include family members.”
- **Transitioning** back to work when appropriate. “Employers have to be flexible about when employees can come back and be fully productive,” Bergmann says. Some may never be restored to full productivity.
- **Workers’ Compensation.** This is a big issue that will soon come to the forefront, Bergmann predicts, if claims of psychological injury come to play. In South Carolina, for example, workers comp includes compensation if someone is traumatized by watching another worker get his or her hand caught in a machine. In Georgia, there has to be actual physical injury. What will the complications be if people file claims from watching the Towers fall – either from their office two blocks away, across the bridge, or on tv?

“The workplace is a magnificent place in which to bring the resources

Tom Waldecker, who manages the faculty and staff assistance program at U of Michigan (Ann Arbor), brings up 3 key points:

1. **“There isn’t any closure to this issue,”** he told pr. Unlike other traumas, which happen once and don’t loom as future threats, the current crisis is different. “People’s fears aren’t just going to go away.”
2. There’s a debate, highlighted recently in the *New York Times*, about **whether continuous discourse on the subject is good for people.** “Some people would argue that having people talk forever is just keeping the anxiety going.”
3. There’s **plenty of company** – and no escape. Workers nationwide, from the CEO to the mail clerk, are all going through the same thing.

JEFFREYS ADVISES THAT EMPLOYERS TRY THE FOLLOWING:

- Let employees talk via company lunches, after-work get-togethers, coffees, etc.
- Allow moments of silence for prayer, reflection.
- Acknowledge the loss of someone’s loved one, friend, colleague, associate.
- Employ rituals, e.g., the lighting of a candle, etc. in memory of those lost.
- Bring in a specialist who can help employees cope with their feelings.
- Encourage employees to get the help they need privately, either through a trained therapist or at their place of worship.

Jeffreys believes the effect on the culture has been massive. “Throughout the world, there’s a sense that humanity has been assaulted – our assumptive world has been violated. We may get it back, but it won’t be the same again.” He notes a general softening in human relationships – people are kinder, music being played on the radio is gentler. “You don’t hear the angry lyrics anymore.”

(Jeffreys’ book on coping with workplace trauma has been updated since the terrorist attacks and excerpts can be downloaded free at www.crisplearning.com. For more information about Post Trauma Resources, visit www.posttrauma.com.)

COMPANY OFFERS DISPLACED FIRMS THOUGHTS, PRAYERS, E-MAIL ACCESS

“In keeping with one practitioner’s call for people to help by ‘offering what we do best’ (see pr 9/24), this firm made a difference by donating its business services.” United Messaging (West Chester, PA) is offering companies displaced by the upheaval a unique gift: free communications access until they can get themselves up and running. “When it came about, we, like everyone else, wondered, ‘What can we do to help?’” spokesperson Glenn Frantz told pr. Execs at UM came up with a unique idea: enable affected companies to receive and send e-mail. “We put out a press release that day, recognizing that people would have to communicate somehow. We offered them a free, temporary e-mail service to which they could transfer their e-mail accounts and domain names.” That meant that the accounts and domains would go through UM’s server.

UM is a company that provides a message servicing system for large companies that choose to outsource this function. “If a company has, say, 3000 employees, we can help them with their e-mail and message systems so they don’t have to deal with them.” Providing communications relief to the Trade Center companies was a fitting charity for UM, which already had the infrastructure in place.

WHEN THE BUILDINGS CAME DOWN, SO DID SYSTEMS

“A lot of (communications systems) nearby were knocked out.” The *Wall Street Journal*, for example, had to evacuate its

locale; fortunately it already had disaster recovery in place for communications. UM offered to help others, and found that “people are very appreciative.” Four companies signed on, “one of which was able to resume e-mailing in the first 24 hours.” All of the accounts have been transferred, but they look the same: “no one has to get a new address,” Frantz says. “During tragic times like these,” adds CEO Ben Trowbridge, “we all feel we have an obligation to help. United Messaging is doing what it can to assist the affected companies as they struggle to restore critical communications infrastructure. (For more info, contact Frantz at 866/601-1673 or, via e-mail at messagingexperts@unitedmessaging.com)

VOLUNTEERING AMONG FAMILIES ON THE RISE – CORPORATIONS SEE BENEFITS

28% of Americans *volunteered with family members* in 1998, up from 22% in ’91; 51% of *all* volunteers served with family members, up from 43% in ’91, according to a new report by Independent Sector (IS) – “America’s Family Volunteers: Civic Participation Is a Family Matter.” Other stats:

- Family volunteers gave an average 4.3 hours per week in ’98; volunteers who did not volunteer with family members gave 2.8 hours.