

Get live updates from the 'Whitey' Bulger Trial, plus must reads.

The Boston Globe

TEXT SIZE | MANAGE ACCOUNT | LOG OUT

Metro 

	SECTIONS	 MY SAVED	
NEWS 	METRO		
ARTS 	BUSINESS		
SPORTS 	OPINION		
LIFESTYLE 	MAGAZINE		
INSIDERS 	TODAY'S PAPER		
LOTTERY 	OBITUARIES		
GLOBE NORTH 	GLOBE SOUTH		
GLOBE WEST 	68 BLOCKS		
SPOTLIGHT: DRIVEN TO THE EDGE 	TERROR AT THE MARATHON		

Metro

# Specialists say wounded psyches also need healing

By [Lisa Wangsness](#) | GLOBE STAFF APRIL 17, 2013

-  ARTICLE
-  PHOTOS
-  GRAPHIC
-  VIDEO
-  COMMENTS



WENDY MAEDA/GLOBE STAFF

**Angela Hamilton of Hickory, N.C., attended a prayer service at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul Tuesday. Hamilton had planned to run the Marathon but pulled out due to illness.**

PRINT REPRINTS E-MAIL SHARE

As crowds streamed out of the Back Bay following Monday's explosions, priests and seminarians at the St. Clement Eucharistic Shrine near the Fenway stood in front of their stone building and offered those who passed by fruit and water — and a chance to talk.

A young woman wanted to know where the T stop was. She seemed fine, but when the Rev. Tom Carzon gently pressed her, she said that she had been right next to the explosions that rocked the Boston Marathon. She told him about it and accepted his offer to pray together.

“A lot of people would say, ‘I don't have much to share,’ ” Carzon said. “To be aware of one's own story, I think, is very important.”

A day after the Marathon explosions, clergy and mental health professionals were working hard to help people process what had happened.

They urged runners, spectators, their families, and friends — and the wider public — to pay attention to how they are coping, and to get help if they need it.

Everyone experienced the explosions and their aftermath from a different angle; some were hurt, others were relatives or friends of those injured, still others were first responders or spectators or watching at home on television. And each person brings a different life experience and coping capabilities.

But the Marathon attacks, said trauma specialists, delivered savage blows to the mental health of thousands. Some spent hours searching frantically to find lost runners. Many friends and relatives of those injured know multiple people who were hurt.

“When you go to an event like the Marathon, you don’t go there alone; you go with your friends and loved ones,” said Dr. David Gitlin, director of the Division of Medical Psychiatry at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. “We’re seeing multiple family members going to different hospitals.”

The trauma radiated well beyond those injured and people close to them. That it was Marathon Day and Patriots Day, a beloved local rite of spring, heightened the emotional whiplash.

When violence occurs “when the whole world is watching, and it turns from celebration and elation into absolute horror — that’s the kind of emotional jerking that is very unique to this situation,” said Dr. Eugene Beresin, a child psychiatrist at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Unlike the mass shootings that have shattered other communities over the last decade, the gruesome aftermath was public and caught on camera and video. Images are still whirling across the Internet and

## Related

PHOTOS



### Scenes from the Boston Marathon bombing

- Video: Father and daughter called to action
- Graphic: Medical tent turned trauma unit
- Instagram: Joy to tragedy, photo by photo
- Coverage: Boston Marathon bombings

UP TO  
**70% OFF**  
*home décor*

Joss & Main [SHOP NOW >>](#)

repeating in endless loops on television news, a dangerous vortex that can traumatize viewers all over again, doctors said.

“These kinds of events have a way of eroding one’s fundamental sense of safety, which we need in order to function and live,” said Dr. Michael Leslie, a psychiatrist at McLean Hospital who specializes in treating trauma.

The instant recognizability of the place where bodies lay bleeding, Copley Square, compounded the emotional effect, even for those who were not there.

“When you live in Boston and see pictures of Boylston Street . . . there is something that is searing about it,” said Dr. Michael C. Miller, a psychiatrist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Leslie was eating ice cream several blocks away when the bombs exploded. As he walked back to his home in the South End, he checked the news on his smartphone, and for hours afterward stayed glued to the television.

But he made himself turn it off. On Tuesday morning — he had the day off — he woke up, took his dogs for a long walk, went grocery shopping, and later cooked a good dinner. It is the kind of thing he advises others to try: “Activities which are grounding, which they are able to participate in in a mindful way, which help them realize they are currently safe, and they don’t need to be in a constant state of dread.”

What else? Get a good sleep, doctors said. Do things that make you happy. Be with people you love.

Rabbi David Lerner of Temple Emunah in Lexington planned to lead a meditative evening Ma’ariv, or prayer service, Tuesday night for his congregation.

“I find meditation, prayer, silence, and being in groups together can be a powerful way to bring a sense of calm, peace, and healing,” he said. “Whether we were . . . there or not, we’ve all seen the footage, it makes us all there on some level.”

One member of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center suffered severe leg injuries in the blast, said Imam William Suhaib Webb; others are physicians who treated victims. Still others, he said, worry that the bomber “could be a Muslim who claims to be acting out in the name of his religion.”

Webb said the community has drawn comfort from trying to help — volunteers are standing by to offer counseling and other assistance — and from the support of neighbors and the interfaith community.

“Boston has really come together in a really profound way,” he said.

Child psychiatrists say parents should calibrate their response to their child’s age, but toddlers, school-age

children, and teenagers all need to feel safe, reassured, and hopeful about the future, said Beresin.

“Make sure to have some quality time with family this week, like a family dinner where everyone has a chance to talk about what happened,” said Dr. Stuart Goldman, a Boston Children’s Hospital psychiatrist.

Jonathan Ralton of East Boston wore his yellow Boston Marathon jacket to a prayer service Tuesday at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul.

He had been working as a race volunteer a block and a half from the explosions. When he tried to run toward the scene, he said, he was nearly trampled by those desperate to get away.

On Tuesday, he said, “I just wanted to have a place to reflect and to try and go about my day.”

*Deborah Kotz of the Globe staff and Globe correspondent Matt Rocheleau contributed to this report. Lisa Wangsness can be reached at [lwangsness@globe.com](mailto:lwangsness@globe.com).*

 PRINT  REPRINTS  E-MAIL  SHARE

 ARTICLE  PHOTOS  GRAPHIC  VIDEO  COMMENTS

## Learn more

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [BOSTON GLOBE INSIDERS](#) [REFER A FRIEND](#) [EPAPER EDITION](#)

### MY ACCOUNT

[LOGOUT](#)

 [MY SAVED LIST](#)

[MANAGE HOME DELIVERY](#)

### SOCIAL

[FACEBOOK](#)

[TWITTER](#)

[GOOGLE+](#)

### CONTACT

[HELP](#)

[FAQS](#)

[GLOBE NEWSROOM](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

### MORE

[ARCHIVES](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[TERMS OF SERVICE](#)

[TERMS OF PURCHASE](#)

[WORK HERE](#)