



Trauma-informed communications and events guidelines

Trauma-informed messaging guidelines:

- Refrain from or be spare with the use of adjectives: Horrific, senseless, devastating, unconscionable, unimaginable, etc.
- Referring to this event as “a tragedy” is okay. Saying “tragic loss of life” is also okay.
- Describe the shooting that happened on Feb. 13 as “The violence our community experienced.”
- Use “students” instead of “victims”
- It’s important to be thinking about that and balancing re-traumatizing students, faculty, staff and others with repeated communications and streamline efforts where possible to reduce the overall volume of outreaches to our audiences. The university is communicating a lot of important and critical information to all audiences.

Example of opening message:

“The violence our community experienced has had a profound impact on Spartans near and far. We grieve the tragic loss of life, and we continue to send positive, healing thoughts to those who were wounded.”

Event/town hall guidance:

Events like town halls should generally be avoided at this time, unless:

- You have experts within your college or unit who specialize in trauma-informed events, communications and discussions.
- You have consulted with Dr. Alexis Travis from University Health and Well-being to make available counselors or volunteers to be available at the event.

It is incredibly important to remember that the shooting is still an open and ongoing investigation, so the university and leaders across campus are limited in the information they can share. With that in mind, the questions you are likely to receive also may not have answers and that could add to the harm and concerns, rather than provide relief and healing for members in your community.

Additionally, the MSU Department of Police and Public Safety is assessing different additional security options for events moving forward. Resources may be limited, and additional security may not help in a way that helps further your community’s sense of safety. However, MSU DPPS is always available to discuss event safety and planning.

For additional questions and communications council, please reach out to VP and Spokesperson Emily Guerrant (emilyg@msu.edu) or Deputy Spokesperson Dan Olsen (olsenda2@msu.edu)