



Hoax Threats in Utah Schools:

School Faculty Guide

Hoax threats can be an unsettling and disruptive experience for schools. Hoax bomb threats, shooting threats, and other empty threats of future school violence are far from harmless. In addition to lost instructional time, they can result in emotional trauma for all members of the school community. There are a wide variety of reactions that one can experience during and after a hoax threat.

Cognitive Reactions

Confusion

Disorientation

Worry

Intrusive
Thoughts/Images

Self-Blame

Faith

Social reactions can include things like **extreme withdrawal** and **interpersonal conflict**.



Emotional Reactions

- ▶ Shock
- ▶ Sorrow
- ▶ Grief
- ▶ Sadness
- ▶ Fear
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Numbness
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Guilt
- ▶ Shame
- ▶ Challenge

Physiological reactions can include:

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle tension
- Stomachache
- Increased heart rate
- Exaggerated startle response
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased energy

Many of these thoughts, feelings, and behaviors may occur when you are reminded of what happened. Reminders may include places, people, sights, sounds, smells, and related feelings.

It's ok, to not be ok.

Things That May Help

- Seeking counseling
- Taking breaks
- Maintaining a normal schedule
- Scheduling and engaging in positive activities (i.e. sports, hobbies, reading)
- Relaxation techniques (i.e. breathing exercises, grounding, meditation)
- Talking to and spending time with family and friends
- Eating well, getting enough sleep, and exercising
- Integrating the experience and finding meaning

When to Seek Additional Support

Flashbacks happening constantly or consistently

Loss of interest in activities

Feeling “on edge” or “on the lookout” for danger, startling easily or being jumpy

Difficulty sleeping, problems concentrating or paying attention

Detachment from others, social withdrawal

Resources

- SafeUT
- 9-8-8
- Employee Assistance Program
- Religious Leaders or other special persons of trust
- Accessing community mental health supports