

## Self-preservation: Dealing with what you see

**Keep things in perspective.** Different reporters, photographers and editors handle traumatic situations differently. Obviously. But it's always a good idea, when you cover traumatic situations every day, to keep things in perspective. "At the end of the day, I get to go home to my family and a pretty decent life," said the Chicago Tribune's David Heinzmann. "And whatever tragedy or misery I've seen, I'm not the one who's really experiencing the tragedy... The people who you write about, the people who you interview, those are the ones it really takes a toll on... So, whatever discomfort I see in covering that really pales in comparison to the real suffering that those people are going through. And I think seeing that is a real check."

**Prepare yourself mentally.** "You are covering crime. So that means you're going to interview a wife whose husband was just murdered. You're going to interview a brother whose sister just went missing... you're going to a plane crash and [will] see bodies," said Lisa Rosetta of The Salt Lake Tribune. "Be prepared to write about some of the worst people in your community and some of the most unfathomable crimes. It can get to you, and if you don't have the stomach for those kinds of things, I wouldn't recommend this job. Not everyone is cut out for this."

**Talk to people.** Engage colleagues, editors, and people outside the newsroom. Talk to them about what you've seen and what it means. And don't be afraid to tell someone when it gets to be too much. "One thing that helps me is just to talk with my colleagues," Rosetta said. "And to talk to people outside of the journalism profession. Because I think we ... become desensitized to it."

**Articulate what you've experienced.** "Verify what you saw and what you heard and what you felt," Rosetta said. "And validate that... I think you have to keep everything in perspective."