

Realistic Grief & Recovery Expectations

When a loved one is murdered, each member of the family goes through an intense period of grief. This period of grief may be complicated and prolonged, not only by the violence, suddenness and public nature of the death. Also, by the many intrusions that a homicide brings to a family--the criminal justice system. Grief has a series of stages and general time frame of mourning but it is important to realize that grief is a very personalized and individual journey into recovery. Society, generally, grants between 6 and 12 months to grieve; however, 18 to 24 months are a more realistic period. The most difficult times may not occur immediately because the grieving person is protected by a state of shock or numbness. Friends and supporters may expect the grieving person to be getting well just at the time the acute pain is setting in. Remember that it is important to trust one's own feelings and intuitions and to be gentle and patient with oneself.

Stages of the Mourning Process

Behavior Characteristics Often Overlap and survivors may find the process prolonged.

48 hrs. - 2 wks. *Shock and Numbness

1. Resists input, (trying to find shelter)
2. Judgment- difficulty making decisions, concentration limited.
3. Functioning impeded, ("zombie/ robot").
4. Emotional outbursts.
5. Stunned feelings.

2 wks. - 4 months *Searching and Yearning

1. Very sensitive to stimuli.
2. Anger and/or feelings of guilt.
3. Feeling restless or impatient.
4. Feeling uncertain.
5. Testing what is real.

4 months - 7 months* Disorientation

1. Disorganization
2. Depression
3. Guilt
4. Weight loss or gain of more than 10 pounds.
5. Aware of reality
 - a) Very aware of reality
 - b) Time of turning to a physician.
 - c) Psychosomatic dimension (colds, etc)
 - d) Temptation to see mourning as a disease.
 - e) Low Compliance with doctors' orders, Noncompliance with other expectations.
 - f) Beware of trying to live as if nothing had happened.
 - g) Beware of the urge to flee--Strong sense of loss.

18 months - 24 months *Reorganization

1. Sense of release (no longer obsessed by loss).
2. Renewed energy.
3. Make judgments more easily.
4. Stable sleeping and eating habits.

Personal Community Resource

Reference*

Agency	Contact	Phone #
Victim-Witness	_____	_____
District Attorney	_____	_____
Police	_____	_____
Sheriff	_____	_____
C.H.P.	_____	_____
County Jail	_____	_____
Coroner's Office	_____	_____
Juvenile Center	_____	_____
Funeral Home	_____	_____
Clergy	_____	_____
Hospital	_____	_____
Insurance Co.	_____	_____
Employer	_____	_____
School	_____	_____
Miscellaneous	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Case Number	_____	_____

*Phone numbers are obtainable through your directory assistance or in the front of your phone book.



Homicide

Support

Network



Sacramento Homicide Support

Network is a homicide support group that provides emotional support to individuals and families facing the trauma of having a loved one murdered.

The Network consists of the District Attorney's Victim-Witness Program and members of Homicide Support Group, concerned individuals who, like you, have faced this tragedy. We strive to provide a program geared to the needs of your unique and individual situation.

The Network provides a safe, caring, non-judgmental response to those who have been personally touched by the agony of having someone close die under such violent and traumatic circumstances.

The Homicide Support Network is aware of how hard it can be to express feelings associated with a sudden and violent death. All too often, members in our community are forced to face the pain alone, but we want you to know.....

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU THROUGH A SUPPORT GROUP

Where: District Attorney's
Office
901 G Street
Sacramento, CA
95814

When: First Wednesday of
Each month

Time: 6:30p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Are You A Homicide Survivor?

"Survivors of homicide victims" is a phrase used to describe those individuals who had special ties with the person(s) murdered; however, the term encompasses many more people with a seemingly more distant relationship, such as neighbors, co-workers, friends and acquaintances. They too, may feel the need for support.

Things To Think About Now!

Survivors suffer a wide range of initial responses: shock, disorientation, numbness, disbelief and denial to name a few. Any or all of which can shut down your everyday rational thinking. To compound this emotional struggle, there are various decisions and arrangements that must be addressed. Here are a few suggestions to assist you.

- Keep in touch with authorities for updated information.
- Inform family and friends about the homicide.
- Make appropriate funeral and burial arrangements.
- Consider the housing of relatives during the funeral, and possibly longer.
- Contact the Coroner's Office regarding victim identification, release of the deceased, and death certificate.
- Secure deceased's residence. Arrange for a "house-sitter" during funeral services, and change locks.
- Recognize the possibility of media coverage.
- Contact your employer and deceased's employer or school (as appropriate).
- Keep track of medical and funeral expenses for possible reimbursement.
- Locate the deceased's will and medical/life insurance policies.
- Advise deceased's creditors, and financial institutions.

Immediate Support Services Available

A representative from the Victim-Witness program is available to assist you regarding your immediate needs. Listed here are a few of the support services available to you and your family.

- One to one emotional support.
- Assistance in making rational decisions during the immediate crisis and beyond.
- Guidance in making funeral arrangements.
- Assistance in contacting relatives and clergy. Information pertaining to funeral and medical expense compensation.
- Peer support group.
- Liaison between you and the District Attorney's Office.
- Information regarding the release of victim's personal property.
- Advice in coping with the judicial system.
- Information on pending court proceeding and accompany you to them.
- Assistance in applying to the "State Board of Control Victims of Crime Program" for reimbursement of crime related expenses.

Homicide Support Network Meetings are held monthly at the Victim-Witness office, which is located inside of the Sacramento County District Attorney's Office. We invite you to join us. Some people come to share and others just come to listen. Supportive friends and family are welcome. There is no pre-registration, and there are no fees.

We are not a therapy or religious group. We are a workshop/discussion group where healing is slowly and gently promoted as you gain insight and understanding in dealing with your grief. **For complete information, contact the Victim-Witness Center at (916) 874-5701.**