

Recovery – What is it?

Grief for families of murder victims is very difficult and long lasting. As a survivor, you may go through many of the following:

Trauma

When a loved one is murdered, it is highly likely you will be traumatized. The trauma may cause you to re-experience the event over and over again. You may have nightmares. Certain sights, sounds, smells, or news events may trigger your trauma. While these feelings may be common, it is important to continue to talk about the event in order to recover some of your control of the event and to stay in touch with your reality about what happened.

Shock

You may feel as if the death of your loved one is “all a bad dream”. You may be in shock for several months or even longer. As the shock wears off, intense emotion may follow as reality sets in.

Depression and Loneliness

You can get these feelings at any time for very long periods. Try to find support groups, counselling, or someone to talk to – it will help. If it seems to you that other people have returned to life as normal, they may not be as able to listen to you or help you. You have the right to choose when and with whom you talk. Feel free to continue to find listeners who can let you be where you are while you evolve through your grief. CPOMC support/ sharing meetings offer a safe place to speak and share in a constructive way. We are not counsellors or psychologists. We are however, parents and families of murdered victims who are experiencing the same depth of grief that you are. What we do is “understand”.

Physical Illness

After a terrible experience like murder, it's normal to have headaches, feel sick to your stomach, not be able to sleep, gain or lose weight, and have other physical illnesses. Usually these symptoms will subside, but if they continue to interfere with your daily functioning, see your doctor.

Panic

You may feel as if you are going crazy. Again, try to find a support group or talk with a counsellor to help you deal with the pain and emotional stress.

Guilt

As a survivor, you may feel guilty or regret things you said or didn't say. It is very important to remember that you did not have control over the crime. Find someone to talk with who will allow you to explain your feelings of guilt.

Many survivors find that becoming involved with crime prevention groups or other action groups helps to stop the guilty feelings. In time, you may want to participate in one of these groups.

Anger and Resentment

You will want to blame someone for the crime – including the police, attorneys, other family members, yourself – and the suspect. You may think about taking revenge, getting back at the person suspected of killing your loved one. This is a normal feeling; but, if you begin to think about acting on this feeling, get counselling help immediately.

Inability to Resume Everyday Activities

You may feel like it's difficult or impossible to function in everyday society. Activities that you once enjoyed may seem meaningless. It can be hard to laugh, or think that you will ever feel happy again.

Take your time to heal. Being with and talking with other family members or survivors of homicide victims can help you.

Hope

Eventually, your painful feelings of grief will erupt less frequently. You will feel you have been changed forever by this terrible experience – but you may also find that life will once again take on meaning and purpose.

Each person is different and can feel a range of emotions. Remember that, whatever your reactions are, they are normal for you.