

Issues often faced by some survivors of homicide victims:

1. The desire to know all the facts and mostly the why of these senseless deaths.
2. Endless grief. The funeral is only the beginning of life without the loved one, and it can be difficult to find hope in your loss.
3. Loss of ability to function on the job, at home or in school, etc.
4. A strain on marriages (sometimes resulting in divorce) and the strain on family relationships as everyone copes differently with the grief associated with murder..
5. Impact on health, faith and values. Self-care is essential in the aftermath of murder.
6. Impact on other family members, children, siblings, friends, co-workers, etc. Usually parents are acknowledged as the grief-stricken, leaving many other legitimate mourners with the care and support that they need.
7. Society's attitude regarding murder as a form of entertainment. Murder movies, violent video games and murder mystery shows are things that really can re-trigger trauma and grief for survivors.
8. Financial burden of medical and funeral expenses. Victims have certain rights to compensation and should seek all information from their local crime victim's advocate and may request assistance with completing the paperwork.
9. Medical expenses for stress-related illnesses and professional counseling for surviving family members. Grief is not a "mental illness." It is a normal reaction to an abnormal event and a survivor may need professional assistance to deal with the trauma .
10. Financial burden of hiring private investigators to help with unanswered questions and issue.
11. Public sympathy and sensationalism of the murderers.
12. The feeling that the murderer, if found, gets all the help; survivors of homicide victims have few rights.
13. Outrage about the leniency of the murderer's sentence.
14. Unanswered questions about the crime, such as "What happened?" and "Did my loved one suffer?"
15. Bitterness and loss of faith in the American criminal justice system and other institutions that may have failed to provide for the safety of your loved one.

What others can do to help and what you can do to help yourself in the aftermath of a murder:

1. Remember that each person has the right to grieve in his or her own way, despite the similar cause of death.
2. Be a good listener.

3. Initially offer very specific help to a survivor like, "I can do your laundry for you on Mondays or do your grocery shopping on Tuesday; let's make a list now." (Saying, "If you need anything, call" is not helpful if you have no intention of actually helping.) Bringing food for the first few weeks that is easy to heat up or can be eaten cold since families often struggle doing the basics of self care, initially, and grocery shopping can be especially painful after the loss of a family member, as many foods remind survivors of the victims.
4. Let your friends and family members cry. They do not have to be strong. They grieve because they have strong love and it is the strength of their love that will get them through.
5. Everyone has choices. They cannot choose what happens to them, but they can choose how they respond to their personal loss. We need to respect the choices, as there is no one right way to grieve.
6. Saying things like "Heaven needed another angel" is NOT helpful.
7. It is okay for a homicide victim to feel however they feel, and that includes anger. They just need to channel it in a way that it does not hurt themselves or others.

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