



People from all walks of life can be victims of homicide. Family members, significant others and friends become co-victims when their loved one is murdered.

## **If you are co-victim of homicide...**

The violent death of a family member, intimate partner, or close friend is one of the most traumatic experiences you could ever face. It is an event for which no one can adequately prepare, and can result in a wide range of emotional pain and upheaval. Everyone close to the victim will grieve in a different way. This sudden and unnatural manner of death presents unique feelings and emotions that compound your grief. You may feel that you have lost control of your life and your sense of safety and security. You may also question your faith or religion.

When you first learn about the homicide, you may experience shock and disbelief, numbness, changes in appetite or sleeping patterns, difficulty concentrating, confusion, anger, fear and worry. It may be difficult to understand how others are able to go on with their daily routines. For a long time, the emotional and physical suffering may seem to use up all the energy you have. Even though you knew before the murder that bad things happen, it may have seemed that they only happened to other people. Now, you have a new sense of vulnerability for yourself and others.

## **Grieving...**

The knowledge that your loved one experienced a death as a result of a crime is traumatic and causes intense grief. The death that took your loved one probably feels unlike any other loss you have experienced. You may feel vast emotional swings. You may feel guilty for not being able to protect your loved one, even if you know that was impossible. Often there are differences between what you feel emotionally and what you know intellectually. Even many years after a murder, co-victims may suddenly find themselves crying over their loss. Certain events such as birthdays or anniversaries may trigger this kind of grief.

Remember that each person deals with tragedy in his or her own way. At times, you may feel depressed or hopeless and lack interest in things you once enjoyed. Intense feelings are common. Emotions may come and go or overwhelm you. Moment by moment your feelings may differ, and it is important to find an outlet for what you are feeling.

Co-victims are forever changed by homicide. Although life will never be the same for you and your family, many homicide co-victims find that with time, they can face life with new understanding and new meaning.



## **Where can you get help?**

Our community has resources to help you cope with this overwhelming time in your life. You and your family might wish to seek the support and understanding of others who have gone through similar trauma. Many survivors say that attending a homicide support group, though difficult at times, helped them in their grieving process. These support groups can help you realize that you are not alone and that others experience and survive the same depth and complexity of emotions and frustrations. You may also wish to seek out counselors who understand the grief that follows traumatic death.

## **The Criminal Justice System**

Your involvement with the criminal justice system may complicate your grief. Often, homicide co-victims feel depersonalized throughout the criminal justice process. Through the police investigation, you may hear for the first time certain details about your loved one that can be confusing or hurtful. Inaccurate or inappropriate information about your loved one may come out in court or in the media. In addition, court rules and continuances can be very frustrating. The timeline for these cases is often long and can involve resets, appeals, and can last years. Survivors find that arrests do not always end in prosecution, prosecutions do not always end in convictions, and convictions do not always mean stiff sentences. If the murderer is never arrested, your grief process may be even more difficult.

## SUPPORT

### Parents of Murdered Children and Other Survivors of Homicide Victims (POMC)

A self-help support organization designed to offer emotional support and information to persons whose loved ones have been murdered.

Greater Portland Oregon Chapter Leader:  
Mary Elledge: (503) 656-8039

To locate chapters in other areas, call the toll-free number: (888) 818-7662

<http://www.pomc.org/>

### The Dougy Center

A non-profit organization providing peer support to grieving children, teens and families.

3909 SE 52nd Ave, Portland; (503) 775-5683

Please check the website for other center locations: <http://www.dougy.org/>

### Compassionate Friends

A non-profit, self-help organization open to all grieving parents, grandparents and siblings.

Portland Chapter: (503) 248-0102

To locate a chapter in your area, call the toll-free number: (877) 969-0010

<http://www.compassionatefriends.org/>

### Crime Victims United

An organization working to promote a balanced justice system through legislative action and public awareness.

Email: [contact@crimevictimsunited.org](mailto:contact@crimevictimsunited.org)

### MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

A non-profit organization offering support to victims of drunk drivers.

To locate the nearest chapter, call the toll-free number: (877) 275-6233.

<http://www.madd.org>

## CRIME VICTIMS'

## COMPENSATION PROGRAM

When a loved one has been killed, the financial impact can be a second victimization. Homicide may mean a loss of income for your family. There may be medical bills to pay. Funeral expenses can also be a burden.

The Crime Victims' Compensation Program (CVCP) **may** be able to help with certain out-of-pocket expenses, including funeral expenses, medical expenses, grief counseling costs for relatives of the victim and loss of support to the victim's dependents.

Any other benefits available to you, such as insurance or social security, must be used before CVCP can pay. CVCP cannot cover losses such as pain and suffering or property damage or loss.

CVCP funds are not guaranteed and come with requirements such as getting counseling sessions preapproved. Applications may be denied in part or in full based on the circumstances of the crime. Please talk to your advocate to see what other resources may be available to you.

Applications for CVCP may be obtained through the DA's Office office at (503) 846-8671.

The application can also be downloaded at <http://www.doj.state.or.us/victims/pages/compensation.aspx>.

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## INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS

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### Washington County District Attorney's Office Victim Assistance Program

Kevin Barton  
District Attorney

Justice Services Building  
150 N First Avenue, Suite 300, MS 40  
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124

(503) 846-8671

[www.WashingtonCountyDA.org](http://www.WashingtonCountyDA.org)