

After a Homicide: Resources for Helping Loved Ones Left Behind



A guide to crime victims resources from the BRIDGES Project

This guide was adapted from the Guide for Survivors of Homicide by Alyssa Rheingold, Julie Grier, and Nicole Whitworth (2005), National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Charleston, SC. The current adaptation was developed by Kavita Tahilani, Vanessa Rodriguez, and Elissa Brown of the BRIDGES Project at the PARTNERS Program, St. John's University, Queens, NY.

The BRIDGES Project is supported by Grant No. 2008-VF-GX-K006 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this guide are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Justice.

HOW TO USE THE BOOKLET

Your client(s) may be feeling very overwhelmed right now and you may be unsure about what is going to be happening next. The goal of this booklet is to act as a guide to assist you in better understanding the facts about homicide, its after effects, and how to work with all of the systems involved. In addition, a list of community resources that may be useful to you, your clients and your clients' families are provided. Remember to let your clients know it is okay to ask for help.

It is not expected or even suggested that you read this booklet in its entirety during one sitting. Take your time and read sections that apply to the situation as needed. It is likely that not all parts of this booklet will apply to your client and his or her family. There is a lot of information in this booklet. If you have any questions when reading this material or if you simply would like to discuss it, please contact our program so that we can assist you. **If you have any questions at all about this booklet or follow-up care for your client or someone else, please contact the BRIDGES Project at 718-990-5479.**

This guide is divided into sections for your convenience. These sections cover a range of topics including information on general homicide, specific legal proceedings, treatment options, and victims' rights as defined by the state of New York. Depending on your client's situation, not all sections of the guide will be relevant for you.

This guide also is intended to provide basic information and resources for where to go for assistance. It should not take the place of actual legal assistance or psychological treatment. Instead, it is designed to provide you with the tools you need to seek out the help that will best suite your clients' needs during this particular time.

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Facts about Homicide

What is a homicide?

Homicide is the killing of one human being by another. Included among homicides are murder and manslaughter. Not all homicides are considered a crime, particularly when there is a lack of criminal intent. Non-criminal homicides include: killing in self-defense, hunting accidents, automobile accidents not involving a violation of law (e.g. reckless or drunken driving), and legal government execution.

Murder, on the other hand, generally is committed by a person with a criminal state of mind. That is, the person perpetrating the homicide did it intentionally, with premeditation, knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence.

Who are victims of homicide?

Homicide affects many people. Your client(s) and their families are not alone. Men, women, and children of all ages, religions, and races are victims of homicide. Some victims are rich and some are poor, and they come from all types of neighborhoods.

Strangers actually commit a small percentage of homicides. Most homicides are committed by a person or people that the victim knew.

Who are survivors of homicide?

Survivors of homicide include all loved ones who are left behind after a murder. This includes spouses, children, parents, other family members, and friends. The word survivor means someone who “carries on despite hardships or trauma”, someone who perseveres over their trials. We use the word “survivor” to denote that your clients will have overcome one of the most painful and difficult events a person can have to face.

After a Homicide

What you should advise someone in the first 24 hours

- Get yourself to a safe place if you are in immediate danger
- Care for your injuries if you were hurt, and get help for anyone else involved who may be injured
- Call the police to report the incident, and have a family member or trusted friend with you when they arrive
- Document the incident: nature of the incident, time of crime, description of perpetrator
- Protect yourself against future harm. Either have someone you trust come and stay with you or go to a place where you feel safe.

Common Reactions to Homicide

When a loved one dies violently, a person is certain to feel shock, disbelief and confusion. A kind of numbness may envelop them. That's nature's insulation, cushioning the blow. A sense of intense turmoil may alternate with the feeling of numbness.

The days and months that follow the initial shock might bring physical reactions such as:

- inability to sleep
- lack of appetite
- anxiety
- numbness
- nausea
- tiredness

In addition to feeling sad, grief after a loved one's homicide may cause feelings of:

- anger
- fear
- sense of isolation
- inability to concentrate

Other Common Reactions:

Survivors commonly feel hopeless and helpless. They may experience a sense of loss of control over their lives, loss of security, and loss of trust in a higher power and people around them. For children in particular, reactions may include loss of well-being, a lost sense of fairness, and a feeling of vulnerability.

Anger and rage are normal. A person may become angry at police for not preventing the crime, at physicians and nurses for not saving your loved one, or at the person who caused the death, even if it was an accident. They may even be angry at the one who died for being careless.

Longing is part of the grieving process. There will be times when a person longs for a loved one to return. The anniversary of the death is a painful reminder for most. The experience of holidays, birthdays and other once-happy occasions may also be affected because a person can no longer share these events with your loved one.

Warning Signs for Professional Help:

If a person cannot stop feeling helpless and hopeless and if everyday events continue to trigger reactions similar to those suffered at the time or when learning about the death, then it may be time to consider professional help.

Other symptoms that are warning signs of depression and posttraumatic stress disorder and warrant professional help:

- constant thoughts about the crime
- endless nightmares
- continued isolation from others

The next section provides in-depth information about mental health services.

When to Seek Professional Help

The length of time spent and the difficulty someone has dealing with the loss of a loved one to crime varies greatly from person to person. People vary in the time they spend grieving and also the amount of social support they need or want to have around.

At a time of such loss, there are many outlets of support such as religious leaders in addition to family and friends. There are also many organizations and support groups on the internet who have helpful information (see end of this section and Resources section for more information).

It may be helpful to seek the help of a professional if in addition to grief a client is also experiencing symptoms of PTSD and/or major depression. It might also be beneficial to seek professional help if any of the symptoms of your grief are interfering with the ability to perform everyday responsibilities, such as caring for children, holding down a job, or if you notice any of the following:

- Continuing to experience intense yearning for the deceased that does not diminish over time
- Struggling with substantial feelings of guilt or uncontrolled rage
- Becoming severely depressed and feeling hopeless about the future
- Harboring persistent suicidal thoughts
- Abusing alcohol or other drugs or increasing tobacco use
- Overeating or appetite loss

PTSD and Depression

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Symptoms:

- Re-experiencing the traumatic event by having painful, intrusive thoughts/nightmares about the death
- Avoidance or emotional numbing – marked efforts to stay away from activities, places or things related to the loved one’s death
- Feeling detached from others and an inability to feel positive emotions
- Increased persistent anxiety and physiological arousal – difficulty sleeping, irritability, difficulty concentrating and a tendency to become startled easily

Depression Symptoms:

- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment
- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

Source: American Psychiatric Association (1994). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition. Washington, DC: Author.

Treatment for Survivors of Homicide

How can therapy help?

It is perfectly normal to experience extreme emotions following a death. However, if a survivor feels that their reactions are too much to deal with, therapy can help. Remind them that there is no shame in seeking it out.

Sometimes people who have lost a loved one to homicide can benefit from individual psychotherapy or counseling. Therapy can assist in coping with the loss of a loved one. It can provide the support and skills to help manage anger and sadness as well as everyday stressors. If grief reactions have impacted a person's ability to lead a normal life, therapy can help improve daily functioning.

Treatment options during this difficult time

There are many types of treatments out there for people who have experienced a traumatic loss. Specialized, trauma-focused treatments for survivors have been shown to be quite helpful, but not every therapist is trained in this treatment. Tell survivors that they should not hesitate to ask a therapist about their treatment style and plan.

Usually psychotherapy begins with a clinical assessment in order to determine how best to help a person. A therapist may ask questions that have been asked of a survivor before. Patience is needed with this process as it is very important in figuring out the best treatment.

There are also bereavement support groups as well as special groups for people who are survivors of homicide. In support groups, people with similar experiences gather to discuss how their loss has impacted themselves and their lives, how they are feeling, and how they are coping. Volunteers who have experienced the loss of a loved one usually run these groups. Attending group sessions can be especially helpful to survivors because they can help them feel that they are not alone and that their emotions and reactions are common.

Victims' Rights in New York State

What are the rights of crime victims and their loved ones?

The Crime Victim's Bill of Rights is a concise summary of the provisions made by New York State to ensure fair treatment for crime victims. It is important for people to know their rights so that they can exercise them in order to get the benefits, treatment and justice they deserve.

The following points, to be described on the next pages, are the rights guaranteed to crime victims and their families in New York State:

1. The **Right to Know** through:
 - Information
 - Consultation
 - Notification

2. **Victim Involvement** through the:
 - Victim Impact Statement

3. **Making Victims Whole** by:
 - Crime Victims Board and Compensation
 - Restitution and Reparation
 - Fee Waiver

4. **Protection for Crime Victims** using:
 - Private Settings
 - Secure Waiting Areas

5. **Help for Victims** with:
 - Property return
 - Creditor Intercession/Employer Services
 - Protection from Intimidation

Right to Know

Information, Consultation, Notification: The VINE Program

All crime victims have the right to know if their victimizer is to be released from prison. New York established the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) program to provide ongoing information to victims about perpetrators serving sentences in New York State.

VINE provides a 24-hour hotline (1-888-846-3469) that people can call in order to obtain up-to-date information regarding whether or not a particular inmate is in custody. Victims may register to receive an automatic alert when an inmate is released or transferred from custody.

The correct inmate identification information can be obtained from the police or District Attorney's office. The VINE center checks for custody changes every 15 minutes, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For more information about VINE, and whether it may be helpful for a particular situation, please contact Winette Saunders-Halyard at (212) 266-1358.

Victim Involvement

Victim Impact Statement

Victims of crime have the right to submit a written 'Victim Impact Statement' to the court before a trial. It is included in the 'pre-sentence report'. This statement provides the victim or loved ones an opportunity to recount the crime from their perspective.

If the perpetrator is going to be sentenced, a family member has the right to speak at the sentencing. In order to do so, he or she must give the court 10 days advance notice. The District Attorney's office can help prepare a statement.

Victims or their families also have the right to submit either a written, oral, or audio/video-taped impact statement to the Parole Board, which will be taken into consideration before any final parole decisions are made regarding the perpetrator.

Making Victims Whole: Financial Assistance for Victims

Compensation

File for compensation from the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS). OVS was established to help care for the state's innocent victims' of violent crimes. For the past 40 years, OVS has been providing compensation and other services to this underserved, under-recognized population.

Eligibility

A crime victim or their loved ones may be eligible for compensation from the OVS for any out-of-pocket expenses you have incurred because of the crime. These expenses may include (but are not limited to):

- medical expenses
- burial/funeral expenses
- transportation/moving costs
- crime scene cleanup
- domestic violence shelter/safe house use
- property damage
- wages lost or loss of support
- vocational counseling
- mental health services

Where to get an application

You can get an application from:

- your local police department
- victims' assistance programs (see page 26)
- hospital emergency room
- download one from the OVS website: www.cvb.state.ny.us

Important points to remember

- victims must file the claim within 1 year of the incident
- victims must also submit copies of any related police reports, insurance cards, receipts for incident-related expenses, proof of age, funeral/burial contracts, and/or any other relevant documentation.

File for Restitution and Reparation

Restitution is the compensation paid to a victim by the perpetrator for expenses related to lost wages, mental health services, medical services, etc. It is mandated by the court during sentencing and is considered part of the perpetrator's sentence.

Restitution cannot be payment for damages of future losses, mental anguish or "pain and suffering."

Victims of a crime must contact their DA and request restitution. It is not automatically included in sentencing. They must also be able to present receipts, bills or other documentation that demonstrate the extent of your financial loss incurred because of the crime committed against you. In New York City, all restitution is referred to Safe Horizon.

Fee Waiver

Sections of the Vehicle and Traffic Law authorize the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles to waive the payment of fees for the replacement of a driver's license, permit, registration, and number plates which are lost or destroyed as a result of a crime.

Protection for Crime Victims

Private Settings

Crime victims and other witnesses for the prosecution are given private rooms during the interview processes whether they cannot be seen, heard or identified.

Secure Waiting Area

To avoid intimidation during a criminal trial, a secure waiting area is provided to victims of crime that is separate from the defendant and other witnesses.

Help for Victims

Property Return

Victims have the right to have their property, which may have been taken to use as evidence for the investigation, returned to them as soon as possible.

Creditor Intercession/Employer Services

Many victims of crime do not want to report the incident in order to avoid having to take time off of work in order to participate in criminal hearings, sentencing, etc. New York law does not allow employers to punish or fire an employee for time off taken for trial-related events, to give a statement to the Parole Board (victim impact statement), or to consult with the District Attorney. However, an employer may keep wages from an employee who is absent due to participating in any of the above proceedings.

Protection from Intimidation

Some victims are worried about reporting the incident because of fear of intimidation by the perpetrator. Under New York law, victims have the right to be protected from any type of intimidation including threats and physical injury. The police, sheriff's office or District Attorney can provide advice about precautions one can take and if needed, the court can issue an Order of Protection.

Intimidation is a felony, so if a victim is being harassed or receives unwanted contact from the defendant or anyone associated with case, they should report it to the authorities. If a victim is being threatened or intimidated by the defendant once they are in the custody the New York State Department of Correctional Services, the victim should contact their Office of Victim Services.

For more information on victims' rights go to:

http://www.oag.state.ny.us/bureaus/criminal_prosecutions/bill_of_rights.html

Immigrants' Rights

Often times, crime victims and their families are hesitant to seek out services because they are concerned about their immigration status. Their fear of being reported to the police or other agencies prevents them from getting the help that they both need and deserve. The New York City Office of the Mayor has acknowledged this concern and implemented policies to safeguard the privacy of residents in the 5 boroughs.

Information on Executive Order 41

On September 17, 2003, Mayor Bloomberg issued Executive Order 41 to ensure that all New Yorkers could access services throughout the city without fear of having to divulge too much information. This executive order protects individuals from speaking about their immigration status, sexual orientation, domestic violence history, status as a crime witness, receipt of public assistance, and income tax information.

This means that if a victim or family member of a victim is an immigrant and goes to the police department for help, hospital to seek medical attention or mental health services, or seeks out services at any city agency, they will not be asked about their immigration status.

The only time when this may become a concern is if someone suspects that a person has been involved in a criminal or illegal activity.

Information on Executive Order 120

Mayor Bloomberg also issued an executive order in July 2008 to ensure public access to different languages when seeking services from city agencies. As part of this order, public agencies are required to translate essential public documents and provide interpretation services, including telephone translator services. These services are provided for the top six languages spoken in New York by those with Limited English Proficiency (LEP): Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Haitian Creole, Russian and Italian.

Law Enforcement and Criminal Procedures

The Law Enforcement Process

When an adult is arrested, his or her first contact will be with the local police precinct. The person who does the arrest is the “arresting officer.” The arrest process can legally take up to three days (72 hours) before a judge can be seen.

Throughout this process, the adult arrested must remain silent about everything, except when providing basic information such as name, residence, and other identifying information. It is important to understand that anything the arrested adult says to anyone during this time can be used against him or her.

At the precinct, a detective will interview the arrested adult to get basic information (i.e. full name, present address and family member contact information). If a home number or other numbers are provided, then the arresting officer may call family or friends to verify information. Police will also run a background check for information on any criminal history and to see if there are any outstanding warrants for arrest. This is also needed for the arresting officer to fill out the paperwork to complete the arrest process and continue to court. The police will obtain fingerprints and arrest photos. Then the arresting officer will make a file from the information he/she obtains and send it to the District Attorney’s office so they can draft a criminal complaint and assign the case a docket number.

After that process is complete, arrested adults are transported to another place called “Central Booking.” Here, the process can take a few hours. The arrested adult speaks to an intake person who will ask about any health problems and more identifying information.

This information is used later to determine if bail is required and what the amount will be. If an arrested adult does not have any contacts in the state or locally, travels a lot, or is not a citizen of this country then there will most likely be a bail set, because that person will be considered a “flight risk.”

The Criminal Court Process

After the Arrest

The person who committed the crime is the **offender** or **perpetrator**. In the beginning, he or she is usually called the **suspect**. Once a warrant is issued charging him or her with the crime, he or she becomes the **defendant**.

The defendant's attorney is the **defense attorney**. If the defendant cannot afford an attorney, the court may appoint one to represent him or her, or he or she may qualify to be represented by a defense attorney that is paid for by the taxpayers called a public defender.

The defense attorney may request to interview a family member or loved one of a homicide victim, but they do not have to talk with him or her before trial if they do not want to. If the family member or loved one chooses to speak with the defense attorney, he or she may have an attorney or someone from the district attorney's (DA) office with them. Be sure to inform a survivor that the DA's office must be informed of contact they have with the defense.

The DA is the attorney for the State. The police will conduct the investigation. The DA's office makes decisions about the prosecution of the case. The DA will need to interview a survivor before a court testimony, if that is deemed necessary.

Anyone who has any information about the case is a potential **witness**. They might not have seen the crime committed, but what they know may help the case. Anyone who knowingly helps the offender commit the crime, but doesn't participate in the criminal act is an **accessory** and also may be charged with a crime.

Filing Formal Charges

Typically within a day or two after the arrest warrant is served, the defendant is brought before a judge to be **arraigned**, or formally charged. Its purpose is to present the basic elements of the case to the judge who will decide whether or not there is probable cause and sufficient reason to go forward with the case.

Bail, or the money needed in order to obtain the release of the accused while his or her case progresses, is set at this time. Bail refers to “cash bail” or a “bail bond.” Cash bail means a sum of money, set by the court, posted by the defendant or any other person, upon the condition that the money will be given to the state if the defendant does not appear in court on a designated date.

Bail bond is a form of bail and refers to bail issued by a recognized insurance company. It is a guarantee to the court by the insurance company that while the defendant is free as a result of the bail bond, he or she will appear in court whenever his or her attendance is required. If the defendant fails to appear as required, the insurance company will pay to the Court the specified sum of money designated by the court which set the bail.

Bail can be denied for a defendant, especially for those who commit serious crimes such as murder. When this happens, the defendant has been “remanded.”

The defense attorney may be present and has a right to know what evidence exists against his or her client. This is called the **right of discovery**. The arraignment is open to the public. A family member or loved one doesn't need to attend unless the police or DA asks. They do have a right to be present at the hearing and should be notified by the DA's office when this will be held.

Filing Formal Charges Continued

At the arraignment, the defendant pleads either “guilty” or “not guilty.” If he or she pleads “guilty,” the defendant may be sentenced immediately or at some future time.

He or she may change his or her plea up to the point where the judge accepts the plea of “guilty.” If the defendant pleads “not guilty,” the case will go to trial. He or she may change the plea to “guilty” up to the point where either a judge or jury declares a verdict.

What is a Grand Jury?

The second hearing is held before the grand jury, a group of 16-23 citizens. Grand jury hearings are not open to the public. The grand jury listens to the basic elements of a case. The DA may be the only one who presents a case, or several witnesses may testify. The DA might ask a loved one of a homicide victim to testify, but usually does not. If the grand jury issues a “No Bill,” the case will not go to trial. If the grand jury issues a “True Bill” (or indictment), the case will go to trial.

In New York State, there may be several pre-trial hearings to discuss whether or not evidence or statements were obtained legally before the actual trial takes place.

Going to Trial

A trial may be held before a judge and jury (a jury trial) or before a judge with no jury (a bench trial). The judge or jury must listen to all the facts of the case and decide whether or not the defendant is guilty of the crime. If the defendant is found “not guilty,” he or she will be released from custody. If the defendant is found “guilty,” he or she may be sentenced right then or at a later time. The judge almost always decides the sentence.

Testifying in Court

Testifying means telling the truth. If you learn that family members of a homicide victim will be asked to testify, encourage them to talk with the DA or attorney about what to expect. In court all they need to do is tell what they know and answer questions that are asked. They might be nervous and the defense attorney might try to upset them, but remind them to do their best to stay calm and answer questions with simple, truthful answers.

Charges and Sentencing

The New York penal laws define homicide in several ways:

Penal Code § 125.00 Homicide defined.

Homicide means conduct which causes the death of a person or an unborn child with which a female has been pregnant for more than twenty-four weeks. A person suspected of homicide can be charged with murder, manslaughter in the first degree, manslaughter in the second degree, criminally negligent homicide, abortion in the first degree or self-abortion in the first degree.

There are different forms of homicide. The basic difference between them is the presence of intent or plan in the defendant, and some examples of homicide and murder statutes appear below:

§ 125.27 Murder in the first degree.

A person is guilty of murder in the first degree when he intends and causes the death of a person or of another person. Intent or a goal to kill is required for first-degree murder.

For *second-degree murder* to apply, there needs to be some absence of specific intent and/or some extenuating circumstance, including extreme emotional distress.

Manslaughter Defined

Manslaughter is also a serious crime, and is defined as follows by the statutes:

§ 125.20 Manslaughter in the first degree.

A person is guilty of manslaughter in the first degree when, while intending to cause serious physical injury to another person, he/she actually causes the death of that person or of a third person.

Just as in second-degree murder, *second-degree manslaughter* would constitute the absence of some intent to injure or the presence of some extreme circumstance.

The Sentencing Process

After a plea of “guilty” is entered or a verdict of “guilty” is reached in the case, the judge will pass sentence on the defendant (except in death penalty cases, in which the jury decides the sentence). The judge will consider all the information that has been presented, including a Victim Impact Statement and the information the defense presents. A defendant convicted of a serious crime such as murder or voluntary manslaughter will be sentenced to time in prison. For involuntary manslaughter or reckless homicide cases, the judge may place the defendant on probation. Probation allows the defendant to avoid prison as long as he or she meets the terms of his or her probation.

Sentencing

A murder conviction is considered an A1 felony in New York and perpetrators can serve anywhere from 15 years to life in prison. If convicted of manslaughter, perpetrators can serve up to 25 years in prison. The state of New York does not use the death penalty and it is in the process of being phased out by legislation.

Filing a Civil Suit

Any victim of a crime has the right to file a civil law suit regardless of whether or not there was a criminal trial or what that outcome was for that trial. A civil suit does not determine whether the accused is guilty or innocent, but instead determines whether they are liable for the injuries or damages sustained during the crime. If a perpetrator is found liable, the court may order them to pay monetary damages to the victim. While this is in no way fully compensates for a victim's loss, the money can be a valuable resources to victims and their families.

Questions that may be asked:

- Details about the crime: time, location, identify any witnesses, identify any physical evidence
- Details about the perpetrator (if someone you know, information about your relationship to them; if unknown, any physical description or identifying features)
- Details about the damages sustained (medical information – both about physical, mental and emotional injuries, identification of hospital and other medical services received, identification of any property damage, amount lost from lost wages or spouse's lost wages, sources of funds to cover expenses and damages, etc.)

Fees for attorneys:

Usually attorney fees are based on the outcome of the civil suit. If the victim is awarded a monetary settlement or a judgment is passed in their favor, then the attorney would be paid a prefixed percentage. Victims may also be required to pay for certain filing fees or deposition fees.

*If a person chooses to file a Civil Suit, please see for more information:
http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbID=DB_VictimsInfo126*

When Young People Commit Crimes

In New York State, minors go through a different process than adults in the justice system. Their process is further differentiated based on whether they are classified as a ‘juvenile delinquent’ or ‘juvenile offender.’

A ‘juvenile delinquent,’ is a minor between the ages of 7 and 16 years old who commits an act that would be considered criminal if they were an adult, but they are also in need of supervision, treatment or confinement.

A ‘juvenile offender’ is a minor between the ages of 13 and 15 years old who is charged and tried as an adult for committing one of 18 specific crimes that warrant this type of treatment. The Juvenile Offender (JO) Law of 1978 indicates that all juveniles who are between the ages of 13 and 15 and are charged with murder would automatically be tried as adults.

A minor convicted of a crime can also be classified as a ‘youthful offender’ if the courts feel it is more appropriate for the child to be freed from his criminal record and reducing the sentence to a maximum of four years in jail. In order to qualify for this, a minor must have committed the crime between the ages of 16 and 19, the nature of their crime and prior record must be assessed and the final result is up to the Supreme Court judge.

A minor classified as a juvenile delinquent will have their case heard in family court and is usually represented by a law guardian: either a legal aid attorney from the Juvenile Rights Division, a court appointed attorney or a private attorney. After fact finding and dispositional hearing, a juvenile delinquent may receive probation, placement with Child and Family Services, a Dismissal, a conditional discharge or a fine.

A minor classified as a Juvenile Offender will have their case heard in a criminal court and decided by the state’s supreme court. They are usually represented by a defense counsel: either a legal aid attorney from the Criminal Defense Division, a court appointed attorney or a privately retained attorney. After the trial, a juvenile offender may receive probation or confinement in a Child and Family Services secure facility.

Resources

Here are some useful national hotline numbers and Queens-area organizations that victims can use to access information and support:

Hotline Numbers

National Center for Victims of Crime

1-800-FYI-CALL (1-800-394-2255) - victim assistance hotline

TTY 1-800-211-7996 (for deaf and hard of hearing only)

This is the nation's leading resource and advocacy organization for victims of crime. They provide information about victim compensation, safety planning, victims' rights, and local services. For more information please visit www.ncvc.org.

New York State Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline

English: 1-800-942-6906

English TTY: 1-800-818-0656 (for deaf and hard of hearing only)

Spanish: 1-800-942-6908

Spanish TTY: 1-800-780-7660 (for deaf and hard of hearing only)

They assist with a variety of services including crisis intervention, information, referrals, crisis intervention services and technical assistance.

Mental Health Association of New York City - LifeNet

1-800-LIFENET or 1-800-543-3638

Spanish: 1-877-AYUDESE or 1-877-298-3373

Asian LifeNet: 1-877-990-8585

LifeNet helps people in the New York City area who are suffering with emotional or substance abuse problems. You can speak with one LifeNet's experienced Referral Specialists, who will listen and assess your situation. You will then be given information and a recommended referral in your area, if needed. You can call on behalf of someone you know.

Queens Crime Victim Assistance Programs

HANAC, Inc.

23-16 30th Ave
Astoria, NY 11102
(718) 728-3811

They provide referrals, advocacy, assistance in filing for compensation, and court related assistance for victims of violent crimes including domestic abuse and sexual assault.

Elmhurst Hospital Center Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Program (SAVI)

79-01 Broadway, Room A1-25
Elmhurst, NY 11373
(718) 334-1837

The sexual assault survivor program at Elmhurst Hospital Center provides comprehensive services for survivors of sexual assault of all ages. The services include medical and forensic exams, counseling, advocacy and assistance with New York State Crime Victims Board applications for financial reimbursement.

Jamaica Service Program for Older Adults, Inc. Violent Crimes Assistance Program

92-47 165th Street
Jamaica, NY 11433
(718) 657-6670 / Hotline: (800) 479-4243

This organization offers assistance to victims of violent crimes and elder abuse in Southeast Queens. They provide victim assistance through referrals based upon the victims needs, emergency financial assistance, advocacy, escorts to court, crisis counseling and victims compensation claims assistance.

Korean American Family Service Center

147-29 Elm Ave, 1st Fl
Flushing, NY 11355
(718) 539-6139

Provides crisis intervention, counseling, referrals, advocacy, financial and legal assistance, and other services for Korean Americans.

Queens County District Attorney's Office

Crime Victims Advocate Program

125-01 Queens Blvd.
Kew Gardens, 11415
(718) 286-6818

Provides crime victims' services for the Queens community and referrals for additional care depending on the needs of each individual.

Queens District Attorney Elder Abuse Project

80-02 Kew Gardens Rd, 1st Fl
Kew Gardens, NY 11415
(718) 286-6562

This project offers seniors abuse-prevention seminars, support in dealing with the court system, counseling, and referrals to other services.

Safe Horizon

Queens Families of Homicide Victims

74-09 37th Ave, 4th Fl
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
(718) 899-1233

They provide a number of services to families of homicide victims. These services include assistance with Office of Victims Services applications, advocacy, court accompaniment, individual and family counseling, support groups, and education about families of homicide victims.

Queens Criminal Court Reception Center

125-01 Queens Blvd.
Kew Gardens, NY 11415
(718) 286-6083

The center provides crisis intervention and practical assistance, short-term individual counseling, advocacy with the criminal justice system, Project Safe lock replacement, emergency domestic violence shelter placement, referrals and information (in person and by phone), help with Office of Victims Services applications and the criminal court process.

Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, Inc.

76-01 Myrtle Avenue
Glendale, NY 11385
(718) 366-0200

Provides social services, legal services, and crime victims assistance to individuals and families of all ages.

Violence Intervention Program – Pomonok Victim Assistance

68-01 136th St
Flushing, NY 11367
(718) 793-2852

They provide services to victims of crime, including crisis intervention, counseling services, court related assistance, help in filing for compensation and support groups.

Immigration Assistance

For those families who are adjusting to life in the United States, the loss of a loved one to crime can bring about many more issues related to immigration. The following programs can assist with questions regarding adjustment of status, deportation/removal, family petitions, naturalization/citizenship, political asylum/refugee status, and self-petitions:

- Immigration Hotline
(718) 899-4000; (212) 419-3737
- Citizens Advice Bureau-Immigration Program
(718) 731-3114
- Safe Horizon: Immigration Law Project
(718) 899-1233 x129
- New York Association for New Americans
(212) 425-5051
- Jackson Heights Office of Community Services
74-09 37th Avenue, Suite 42, Jackson Heights, NY 11372
(718) 898-7461

Suggested Reading List

For Adults:

Bucholz, J. A. (2002). *Homicide survivors: Misunderstood grievers*. Amityville, NY: Baywood.

Goldman, L. (2001). *Breaking the silence: A guide to helping children with complicated grief: Suicide, homicide, AIDS, violence and abuse*. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis.

Hammett, M. (2000). *Permanent heartache: Portraits of grief, hope, survival, and life after homicide*. Happaug, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

Jenkins, B. (2001). *What to do when the police leave : A guide to the first days of traumatic loss -- third edition*. Oklahoma City, OK: WBJ Press

Lord, J. H. (2001). *No time for goodbyes: Coping with sorrow, anger, and injustice after a tragic death*. Oxnard, CA: Pathfinder Publishing.

Rando, T. (1991). *How to go on living when someone you love dies*. New York: Bantam.

Rothman, J. C. (1997). *The bereaved parents' survival guide*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Group.

Schleifer, J. (1998). *When someone you know has been killed*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group.

For Children:

Brisson, P. (2006). *I remember Miss Perry*. New York: Penguin. (Ages 5-8)

Brown, L. K., & Brown, M. (1998). *When dinosaurs die*. London: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. (Ages 4-8)

Buck, P. S. (1976). *The big wave*. New York: Harper Collins. (Ages 9-12)

Buscaglia, L. F. (1982). *The fall of Freddie the leaf: A story of life for all ages*. Thorofare, NJ: C.B. Slack Inc. (Ages 6-10)

Cohen, C. K., Heiney, J. T., & Gordon, M. J. (1997). *Daddy's promise*. Bloomfield Hills, MI: Promise Publications. (Ages 4-8)

The Dougy Center. (2002) *After a murder: A workbook for grieving kids*. Portland, OR: The Dougy Center for Grieving Children. (Ages 9-12)

Holmes, M. M., & Mudlaff, S. J., & Pillo, C. (2000). *A terrible thing happened: A story for children who have witnessed violence or trauma*. Washington, DC: Magination. (Ages 4-8)

Kaplow, J. & Pincus, D., & Spiegel, B. (2007). *Samantha Jane's missing smile: A story about coping with the loss of a parent*. Washington, DC: Magination. (Ages 4-8)

Moser, A., & Melton, D. (1996). *Don't despair on Thursdays: The children's grief-management book*. Kansas City, MO: Landmark Editions. (Ages 9-12)

Mundy, W., & Alley, R. W. (1998). *Sad isn't bad: A good-grief guidebook for kids dealing with loss*. Elf help books. St. Meinrad, Indiana: One Caring Place, Abbey Press. (Ages 5-10)

Romain, T., & Verdick, E. (1999). *What on earth do you do when someone dies?* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit. (Ages 9-12)

Salloum, A. (1998). *Reactions: A workbook to help young people who are experiencing trauma and grief*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corp. (Ages 8 and up)

Spelman, C., & Friedman, J. (1996). *After Charlotte's mom died*. Morton Grove, Il: Albert Whitman &Co. (Ages 5-7)

For Teenagers:

Agee, J. (1957). *A death in the family*. New York: McDowell, Obolensky. (Ages 13 and up)

Fitzgerald, H. (2002). *The grieving teen: A guide for teenagers and their friends*. NY: Simon & Schuster. (Ages 13 and up)

Grollman, E. (1993). *Straight talk about death for teenagers: How to cope with losing someone you love*. Boston: Beacon Press. (Ages 13 and up)

Traisman, E. (2003). *Fire in my heart, ice in my veins: A journal for teenagers*. Omaha, NE: Centering Corp. (Ages 12 and up)

Wolfelt, A. D. (2001). *Healing your grieving heart for teens: 100 practical ideas*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press. (Ages 12 and up)

Faith-based resources:

Clapper, G. S. (1999). *When the world breaks your heart spiritual: Ways to live with tragedy*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room.

Peterson, K. P. (2002). *Healing stories of grief and faith, from denial and despair to comfort and peace*. South Berwick, ME: Garrison Oaks Publishing.

For supports who want to understand or help:

Kolf, J. C. (1999). *How can I help?: How to support someone who is grieving*. New York: Fisher Books.

Miller, J. E., (2000). *What can I do to help?: 12 things to do when someone you know suffers a loss*. Fort Wayne, IN: Willowgreen Publishing.
(Sold together with *What will help me?: 12 things to remember when you have suffered a loss*, by the same author.)

Internet Resources

For information about crime victims' rights in Chinese, French, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/foreignlang/welcome.html#6>

Other Spanish-language information:

<http://www.azhomicidesurvivors.org/GriefByHomicide.asp>

For information regarding grief in children:

http://www.ncsnet.org/nccts/nav.do?pid=typ_tg

For national victim organizations:

National Center for Victims of Crime - <http://www.ncvc.org>

National Organization for Victim Assistance - <http://www.trynova.org>

Parents of Murdered Children - <http://www.pomc.com>