

Essential Needs of Murder Victim Families

Compiled by the OTSE Murder Victim Family Services Project

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The suggestions listed here are based on the experiences of homicide survivors. They are not listed in a particular order. Every situation is unique and some murder victim family members have more needs while others have fewer needs. Ideally, it would be a victim advocate's job to review a check list and to attempt to secure that which is needed with regard to each case. When a case is new, the police should not leave before handing victim survivors a standard set of information, per the below. In a best case scenario, a victim advocate begins an initial consultation within 24 hours of a primary family member learning of the murder, as appropriate.

- Trained Grief Counselors for families seeking support;
- Experienced assistance in getting a loved one's body released from the hospital;
- Assistance in paying for funeral expenses including a burial plot, and in planning the actual funeral service;
- Court-provided advocates for the murder victims families, so that they do not have to depend on services from law enforcement offices (including county prosecutors);
- Independent victim service providers who focus on those impacted by the crime regardless of allegations against the victim or past unrelated history of the victim's family;
- A complete list of resources that victim families can access, and someone who regularly visits victim families to talk through the possibilities and assist with applications;
- Assistance to understand and apply for crime victim compensation;
- Personalized assessment of immediate, intermediate, and long-term victim family issues and needs, followed by supportive services that address the unique situations of each victim family;
- Immediate and long-term psychological examinations and treatment for victim families, particularly for those who witnessed the murder of their loved ones or were in close proximity to the crime;
- Economic advice and financial planning services for those who upon the murder of their loved ones find themselves suddenly responsible for giving financial leadership;
- Short term immediate assistance with maintaining mundane tasks like paying bills on time, alerting employers and securing time off, and with creditors when payments dates are missed or income is lost as a result of the homicide of a loved one;
- Financial assistance when a primary wage earner is murdered.
- Assistance in securing employment, to include skill assessment and resume building, when the homicide victim is a primary wage earner;
- Relocation assistance, particularly for those whose loved ones were murdered in their homes;
- Sensitive professionals and/or clergy to assist victim family when they learn they must identify the bodies of their loved ones.