

A Message from County Attorney John J. Choi

Crime can have a devastating and traumatic effect on victims and the people in their immediate lives. Victims of crime and their significant others often go through a difficult adjustment period and face complex challenges that are unique to their experiences.

It is quite normal to experience strong feelings after being victimized. In addition to feelings of grief and loss, it is not uncommon to experience feelings of anxiety and/or anger, have difficulty making decisions, experience sleep troubles, have relationship conflicts, and other possible effects. Some individuals are so severely impacted by a crime that they are diagnosed as suffering from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Talking with others about your experience and feelings can help from having harmful long-term effects from the crime. Sometimes, family and friends are enough to help process the trauma. However, there may be times when family and friends are not enough. There may be times when you may need more help. If that time comes, you may want to reach out and talk to a professional who understands trauma and victimization.



John J. Choi
Ramsey County Attorney

Resources

Canvas Health
(651) 777-5222
www.canvashealth.org

Crisis Connection
(612) 379-6363
<http://crisis.org>

Department of Veterans
Affairs
(612) 725-1921
www.ptsd.va.gov

Hamm Clinic
(651) 224-0614
<http://hammclinic.org>

Family Innovations (for
youth ages 4-18)
(651) 748-5019
familyinnovations.com

National Alliance on
Mental Health Illness,
Minnesota Chapter
(651) 645-2948 or
1(888) NAMI-HELPS
www.namihelps.org

River City Clinic
(651) 646-8985
www.rivercityclinic.com



John J. Choi
Ramsey County Attorney

For more information contact:
Ramsey County Attorney's Office
Victim/Witness Services Division
50 West Kellogg Boulevard, Suite 315
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102-1553
rca@co.ramsey.mn.us
Phone 651/266-3222
Fax 651/266-3048

www.ramseycountyattorney.org

We would like to thank the National Center for PTSD in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for information. More information can be found at www.ptsd.va.gov.



RAMSEY COUNTY

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

A Resource Guide to Help Victims
& Family Members of Victims Cope
with the Effects of Crime

The Office of the Ramsey County Attorney

JOHN J. CHOI
County Attorney



What is PTSD?

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can occur after an individual has been through a traumatic event. Anyone who has experienced a life-threatening event can develop PTSD. If you think you may be suffering from PTSD as a result of your crime victimization, please see a mental health professional or your family physician for a referral to a mental health professional as soon as possible.



What are the Symptoms of PTSD?

Some common symptoms experienced by adults are:

- Reliving or reexperiencing the event. Memories can be uncontrollable. Some victims have flashbacks or experience nightmares that feel like the crime is happening all over again.
- Avoiding situations that remind you of the victimization. Many victims try to avoid people or situations that remind them of the trauma.
- Difficulty in expressing your feelings or feeling numb. It may be hard for victims to talk about the crime and the impact it has had on them. They may shut off their feelings so they don't have to experience those feelings all over again.
- Hyperarousal. This is when someone is 'keyed up or wound up.' Some victims are jittery and appear as if they are on the constant look out for danger. Others may feel rushes of anxiety, panic, or rage. These individuals may also have bouts of unpredictable anger or irritation.

Children can also experience PTSD as a result of a trauma. Children may experience the above symptoms as well as the following:

- Young children may also become upset if their parents are not nearby, may have trouble sleeping or problems with toilet training or using the bathroom.
- School age children may act out the trauma in repetitive play, stories or drama. They may complain of physical problems, become more irritable or aggressive, and/or develop new fears or anxieties that seem unrelated to the trauma.

Getting Help

Not all crime victims will develop PTSD. If you think you may be suffering from PTSD or are having a difficult time coping with the trauma caused by the crime victimization, get help. See a licensed therapist or counselor or make an appointment with your own physician to get a referral to a mental health professional. The two main types of treatment for PTSD are counseling and medication.

Consider seeking counseling if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms as a result of the crime:

- Rage, irritability, fear, sleeplessness, restlessness, hyper vigilance, cynicism, or suspicion of others;
- Extreme fatigue, severe depression, or inability to concentrate;
- Unwillingness or an inability to trust;
- A wish to withdraw; and/or
- Significant increase or decrease in food consumption or use of sedatives or mood altering substances to cope with stress.

A Resource Guide to Help Victims & Family Members of Victims Cope with the Effects of Crime. For help, contact the Victim/Witness Services Division at the Office of the Ramsey County Attorney at rca@co.ramsey.mn.us or call 651-266-3222