



CALLED TO SERVE

Coping with Jury Duty



THE JURY DUTY EXPERIENCE

Thank you for serving your community. Being on a jury is a rewarding experience which in some cases may be quite demanding. You were asked to listen to testimony and to examine facts and evidence. Coming to decisions is often not easy, but your participation is important.

Serving on a jury is not a common experience and may cause some jurors to have temporary symptoms of distress. This information provides ways to cope with symptoms of distress. Not everyone feels anxiety or increased stress after jury duty. It may, however, be helpful to be aware of the symptoms *if* they arise.

Some temporary signs of distress following jury duty may include: anxiety, sleep or appetite changes, moodiness or irritability, physical problems (headaches, stomach aches, no energy), second guessing the outcome, feeling guilty, fear, trouble dealing with issues or topics related to the case, a desire to be by yourself, or decreased concentration or memory problems. To help yourself, it is important to admit any symptoms you may have and deal with any unpleasant reactions.

COPING TECHNIQUES AFTER SERVING ON A JURY

- Before you leave the court, you may wish to see if other jurors want to stay in touch with you after the trial. Sometimes it is helpful to talk to people who went through the experience with you. This can help you to remember that you were part of the group (jury) and are not alone.
- Talk to family members and friends about what is happening to you. One of the best ways to put your jury experience in perspective is to discuss your feelings and reactions with loved ones and friends. You may also want to talk with your family physician or a member of the clergy.
- Stick to your normal, daily routine. It is important to return to your normal schedule. Don't isolate yourself.
- Remember that you are having normal responses to an unusual experience.
- Give yourself time to recover from your exposure to the traumatic events. However, if your distress continues for more than 2 to 3 weeks and seriously interferes with your ability to function, you may want to seek help.
- You can deal with signs of distress by cutting down on alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine. These substances can increase anxiety and fatigue and make sleep problems worse.
- Practice 4-7-8 breathing. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold the breath for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds. Repeat until you feel less stressed.
- Get enough sleep. Increase your daily exercise but not before bed. Decrease your caffeine consumption in the afternoon or evening. Do "boring" activities before bedtime. Listen to relaxation tapes or music before bed.



CALLED TO SERVE

Coping with Jury Duty

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[Taking Care of Yourself](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/taking_care_of_yourself.pdf)

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/taking_care_of_yourself.pdf

[How to Get Help](https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help)

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help>

[Secondary Traumatic Stress/Compassion Fatigue](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/taking_care_of_yourself.pdf)

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/taking_care_of_yourself.pdf

[Vicarious Trauma Toolkit](https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/)

<https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/>

You may also have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through your employer or another organization that may provide additional resources, including counseling.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Jury service is the responsibility of every citizen. No matter what others think about the verdict, your opinion is the only one that matters.

Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to serve on a jury. Some cases are difficult to sit through because of the nature of the case. When the trial is over, it is important to recognize that your service may have affected you and that self-care or professional care may help you in your return to your daily life.

Thank you for your service.

WE APPRECIATE YOU

Very truly yours,

Produced by the
Jury Resource Management Team (JMRT)
Minnesota State Court Administration
25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

(Updated March 2020)