

Coping with Media Attention after a Homicide

Unlike other sudden death when victims can grieve privately, homicide victims have little choice but to share their loss publicly. Very quickly it will become public information via newspapers, magazines, TV, internet, radio, etc. Anyone from any of these sources may contact friends and families to comment on what is taking place.

At times, media can have a role of assisting enquiries and the police can guide you on this. However, the attention may be intrusive, for example, they may follow you home, pretend to be someone other than media, sit outside your driveway, take photos when you are grieving... etc, or you may hear or read something about your families and friends that is disturbing. The media do not always have your best interests in mind. Here are some helpful suggestions to guide you through this:

- Nominate someone you trust to speak on behalf of the family.
- Use an answerphone to filter calls.
- Decide with the family and friends what information you want to share with the public, including Facebook and phone texting, as media will use them.
- Discuss with police/ family liaison what photos you want to give to media.
- Do remember any footage of photos/videos that you allow the media to use can be used in the future.
- When possible, ask police to notify you of media releases they are making before they release them to the media.
- If you choose to speak with the media, ask for any questions in advance and ask to check if being recorded.
- If you choose not to speak to the media, then you can simply say “no comment”.
- Be aware of incorrect information given by friends or others that is disturbing.
- Remember there is no such thing as ‘off the record’ – media will use anything you say at anytime.

CONTACT

Media can be persistent and resourceful, if you have further concerns and questions, please contact the Police officer in charge of your case or Victim Support on 0800VICTIM (0800 842 846) or view our website at www.victimsupport.org.nz