

PATHWAYS CENTER *for* GRIEF & LOSS

LOSING A LOVED ONE TO HOMICIDE

If you have lost a loved one to homicide, your reactions and emotions will be unlike anything you have ever experienced. Times of intense anger at the perpetrator are not uncommon, made worse by sensational and often times inaccurate media coverage. You may feel isolated and helpless; your view of the criminal justice system may have changed. It is important for you to know that the following responses are common. They are listed here to provide the reassurance that you are experiencing normal responses to an abnormal situation. Although this is how you are now feeling, know it will change in time and the intensity of these reactions will lessen.

- Frustration over lack of information as to what is going on
- Seeming indifference of the community, especially the police, to you or your perspective
- Feelings of guilt for not having protected your loved one
- Impatience with the criminal justice system
- Frustration if not allowed inside the courtroom at the time of trial
- Outrage about the leniency of the murderer's sentence
- The memory of your loved one's appearance at the morgue
- Dwelling on unanswered questions - about the crime and or the criminal justice system
- Struggling with the financial burden of medical or funeral expenses and perhaps for professional counseling to cope with all you have been through
- The feeling of injustice that the murderer, if he or she is found, gets all the help; that, as a survivor, you have no rights
- Struggling with the seemingly endless grief
- Loss of ability to function on the job as well as at home, work or in school
- Marital and/or family strain
- Bitterness and loss of faith in the American criminal justice system