

After Your Jury Service: Managing Stress



Thank you for your jury service

Jury service is an essential part of our justice system and can be very rewarding. Being on a jury can also be stressful. Your jury service probably disrupted your work and home schedule. It is possible you were asked to hear difficult testimony or review graphic evidence or images. People react differently to being exposed to such materials. For some, it may cause stress reactions which can occur hours, days, or even months later.

Keep in Mind

Serving on a jury is not a common experience and may cause some jurors to have temporary symptoms of distress. Not everyone feels anxiety or increased stress after jury duty. However, it may be helpful to be aware of the symptoms if they arise.

Some temporary signs of distress following jury service include anxiety, sleep or appetite changes, moodiness, fear, trouble dealing with issues or topics related to the case, decreased concentration, a desire to be by yourself, or memory problems.

Symptoms may come and go, but will eventually go away. To help yourself, it is important to admit any symptoms you may have and deal with any unpleasant reactions.

Your Service is Important

You have performed a service vital to our democracy. People may express their differing opinions on a verdict, but remember that *you* heard and considered all the evidence, and delivered a fair and impartial verdict.

This information is not intended as a substitute for medical advice. If you are experiencing a stress reaction, you can seek assistance from your physician, Employee Assistance Program, local community mental health center, a therapist, or a help line. You can also contact the Office of Jury Commissioner for assistance.

If you are fearful of retaliation or you are threatened after the trial, tell the court and/or law enforcement *immediately*.



Signs of Stress

Stress reactions may manifest as physical (headaches, nausea, lethargy), mental (distractibility, inability to concentrate), emotional (anxiety, moodiness, or fear) or behavioral (increased isolation, drug or alcohol use).

These reactions may resolve themselves but it's important to recognize their existence so you can seek assistance should they persist.

DO:

- Talk about your concerns with supportive peers and family, or even other jurors
- Acknowledge the experience bothered you
- Use relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or yoga
- Get enough rest
- Maintain a good diet and exercise program
- Take time for leisure activities
- Follow a familiar routine
- Spend time with family and friends

DON'T:

- Pretend everything is "o.k."
- Rely on drugs or alcohol
- Withdraw from family and friends
- Stay away from work
- Increase caffeine intake



Ask for Help

If you find that you are having more than a little difficulty after completing your jury service, don't be afraid to ask for help. You may want to try relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, exercise, or meditation. If problems persist, the Office of Jury Commissioner (1-800-THE-JURY (843-5879)) may be able to assist or offer referrals. Additional resources include:

Massachusetts Department
of Mental Health
mass.gov/dmh

United Way Helpline
1-800-233-HELP

National Alliance on Mental Illness
1-800-950-NAMI(6264)
www.nami.org

U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration Helpline
1-800-662-HELP(4357)

Locate a treatment program:
<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

You can also find local resources by asking your physician, or using the internet to search terms like "mental health resources" with the name of your town.

Use this space to record
information about your case:

Case Name:

Judge:

Courthouse/Town:

Trial dates:

The Office of Jury Commissioner
560 Harrison Avenue, Suite 600
Boston, Massachusetts 02118
617-422-5860
MAjury.gov

