**THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE UNIT PROVIDES:**

**Crisis Intervention**
24 hour on-scene crisis intervention for victims and witnesses of violent crime, incidents relating to sudden death or serious injury to which the Denver Police Department has been called.

A Victim Specialist will respond to scenes, hospitals, police stations, or to other designated areas.

**Support and Referral**
Immediate support for a victim or witnesses: listening to the account of victimization, exploring options, notifying family and friends to build a strong support network for the victim or witness and initiating community resources, if needed, including victim compensation, counseling and/or safe shelter.

Follow-up support is always provided to help victims and witnesses after a crime or traumatic event.

**Advocacy**
The Victim Assistance Unit can provide updated case information and act as a liaison with law enforcement, criminal justice and community agencies.

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Please feel free to contact the Victim Assistance Unit if you need any support or assistance.
720-913-6035

Office Hours are:
Weekdays 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Weekends and Holidays 7:00 am - 3:00 pm

*Office is Open 365 days a year*
VICTIMIZATION AND TRAUMA

Victimization is a stressful situation.

A traumatic event can be a painful emotional experience that can create lasting effects. The traumatic event can often feel:

**Sudden:** The event often occurs without warning. It is impossible to predict.

**Arbitrary:** There does not appear to be a reason or an explanation for the event. The event often will leave you with the question: Why me?

**Unpredictable:** No one ever knows if it will happen. The event cannot be anticipated.

COMMON REACTIONS TO TRAUMA

You may experience stress reactions. These reactions may occur for a short or long period of time.

**EMOTIONAL REACTIONS**
- anxiety
- shock
- fear
- hopelessness
- guilt
- sadness
- depression
- vulnerability
- anger
- hyper-sensitivity

**PHYSICAL REACTIONS**
- shortness of breath
- sweating
- nausea/vomiting
- increased heart rate
- heightened startle response
- increased sensory perception
- change in appetite
- change in sleep patterns
- fatigue
- general health problems

**THOUGHT CHANGES**
- recall of similar experiences
- frequent thoughts of event
- memory loss of some or all of event
- confusion
- poor concentration

**RELATIONSHIPS**
- not wanting to be alone
- withdrawal from family and friends
- alienation
- decreased libido

**SENSE OF LOSS**
- safety
- innocence
- personal boundaries
- power and control
- trust
- hope

After trauma happens

While these reactions may be painful, they are part of the healing process. Below are some recommendations to help you through these times.

- Attempt to maintain your normal routine.
- Maintain a good diet: eat well-balanced meals high in carbohydrates and low in sugar.
- Avoid excessive use of caffeine, alcohol and recreational drugs.
- Take time for leisure activities. Exercise may help alleviate some of the physical reactions.
- Spend time with supportive family, friends and co-workers, talking about the incident.
- Keep a journal.
- Expect that you will be bothered by "unusual" feelings that may not be normal for you.
- Give yourself permission to feel bad about the events that have occurred.
- Allow yourself time to recover from the shock.
- Wait before you make any major life changes.
- Be aware of your thinking and that your reactions are normal.
- Ask for help if you need it.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS WILL HELP THE RECOVERY PROCESS.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU HAS EXPERIENCED TRAUMA:

YOU MAY BE HAVING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

THIS PAMPHLET IS INTENDED TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND AND/OR ANTICIPATE WHAT TO EXPECT

THIS IS A GUIDE ONLY