

# Tips for Coping After 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 appreciated.

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 duty include: anxiety, sleep or appetite changes, moodiness, physical problems (e.g. headaches, stomach aches, no energy, and the like), second guessing your verdict, 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.

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.

## Coping Techniques After Serving on a Jury

- Talk to family members and friends. One of the best ways to put your jury duty 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 routines. It is important to return to your normal schedule. Don't isolate yourself.
- Before you leave the court, you may wish to get the names and numbers of at least two of your fellow jurors. 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 a group (jury) and are not alone.
- Remember that you are having normal responses to an unusual experience.
- You can deal with signs of distress by cutting down on alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine. These substances can increase anxiety, fatigue and make sleep problems worse.
- Relax with deep breathing.
  - Breathe in slowly through your nose.
  - Breathe out through your mouth.
  - Slow your thoughts down and think about a relaxing scene.
  - Continue deep breathing until you feel more relaxed.

- Cope with sleep problems.
  - Increase your daily exercise, but do not exercise just before bedtime.
  - Decrease your caffeine consumption, especially in the afternoon or evening.
  - Do “boring” activities before bedtime.
  - Listen to relaxation tapes or relaxing music before bedtime.

## Final Thoughts

- Remember that jury service is the responsibility of good citizens.
- Resist negative thoughts about verdict.
- No matter what others think about the verdict, your opinion is the only one that matters.
- You don't have to prove yourself to anyone.
- Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to serve on a jury. Some cases are very violent and brutal and hard to deal with. The case is now over and it is important for you to get on with your life.
- If you are fearful of retaliation or if you are threatened after the trial, tell the court and/or law enforcement immediately.

If signs of distress persist for two weeks after the jury service has ended consider contacting your physician.