

WHY IS THE CORONER CALLED WHEN DEATH IS DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES?

A coroner is an appointed public official. In Ontario as outlined in the Coroner's Act, cases that fall under the jurisdiction of the coroner include:

- Sudden and unexpected deaths
- Deaths from violence
- Suicides, and
- Those occurring in any suspicious, unusual or unnatural manner

A coroner can order an autopsy. This is performed to determine the cause or time of death but also may be to identify the deceased. Materials are collected as evidence and for toxicology testing.

Information pertaining to the death may be obtained from the coroner. On written request, a copy of the Coroner's Investigation Statement can be provided (usually takes several months to complete). There is a cost, and sometimes insurance companies can reimburse this fee.

Once the coroner releases the deceased to the family, transportation can be arranged with a funeral home or other service provider.

RESOURCES

London Police Service - Crisis Intervention/ Victim Support Unit & Victim Services Middlesex London (519) 661-5636

Provides victims of crime and/or traumatic circumstances with immediate support and referrals to available programs and services.

Reach Out (519) 433-2023 - is a free, 24/7, confidential mental health and addictions support and services line for people living in Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford and London.

Mental Health & Addictions Crisis Centre

The Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Centre is open 24/7 if you are a high risk of suicide, experiencing personal distress or symptoms of a mental illness or if you would benefit from talking to someone to initiate stabilizing supports. The Crisis Centre supports individuals who are 16 and older. 648 Huron Street, London, ON

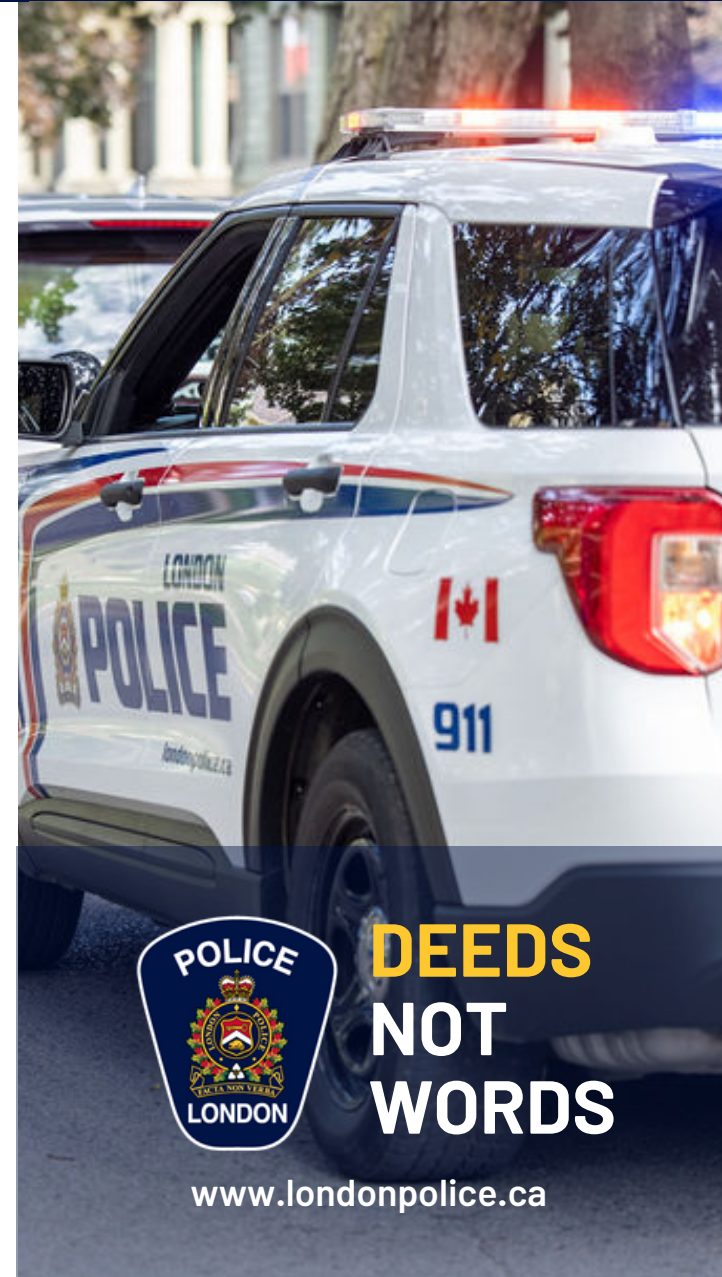
Victim Quick Response Program+

You may be eligible for financial assistance with funeral expenses, crime scene clean-up, homicide survivor support, and counselling. Please contact the Crisis Intervention/Victim Support Unit with London Police Service at 519-661-5636.



LONDON POLICE SERVICE
601 Dundas Street
London, ON N6B 1X1
Phone: 519.661.5670
www.londonpolice.ca

LONDON POLICE SERVICE HOMICIDE SURVIVORS DEALING WITH GRIEF



INTRODUCTION

Losing a loved one through an act of violence is a very traumatic experience. No one can ever be prepared for such a loss. No amount of counselling, prayer, justice, restitution, or compassion can ever bring a loved one back.

EXPERIENCING LOSS

When someone is murdered, the death is sudden, violent, final, and incomprehensible. Your world is abruptly and forever changed.

Homicide survivors will each experience the death differently, as each of you had a unique relationship to the victim. Your own personal history of trauma will also affect the manner in which you experience the death. It is important to remember that no two people grieve the same way, with the same intensity, or for the same duration. /

Grief can be a long, painful process, but it can be managed with assistance from family, friends and/or outside support. Do not be embarrassed or confused by these feelings. They are all natural reactions to an unnatural event, like the murder of a loved one. *iii*

DEALING WITH GRIEF

The founders of 'Parents of Murdered Children' learned that, "the grief caused by murder does not follow a predictable course. It does not neatly unfold in stages. When a person dies after a long illness, his or her family has time to prepare emotionally for the death, to feel anticipatory grief. When someone is murdered, the death usually comes without warning... The much more complicated mourning that follows a homicide may be prolonged by the legal system, the attitudes of society, the nature of the crime, and the final disposition of the case. The intense grief experienced by survivors can last four years, five years, a decade, even a lifetime." *ii*

Emotional

Shock, anger, despair, numbness, grief spasms, terror, guilt, anguish, grief, sadness, irritability, helplessness, loss of pleasure from regular activities, depression, emotional outbursts, emptiness

Physical

Fatigue, insomnia, nightmares, Hyper arousal / Hypervigilance, lethargy, increased heart rate, nausea, diarrhea, cramps, fainting, dizziness, headaches, respiratory problems, change in appetite, startled response / constant arousal

Cognitive

Impaired concentration, impaired decision-making ability, difficulty setting priorities, memory impairment, disbelief / denial, confusion, self-blame, reduced ability to express emotion, intrusive thoughts and memories

Interpersonal

Alienation / isolation, social withdrawal, increased conflict in relationships, vocational impairment, school impairment, a desire for revenge

Spirituality

Questioning one's basic beliefs, faith may be shaken, feeling distant from God, suddenly turning to God

STEPS FOR HEALING

Although there is no one way to grieve, the following list provides some important steps for healing:

- Be honest about your feelings
- Find a safe way to release your anger
- Admit that you may need help
- Allow yourself to cry
- Allow yourself time to recover
- Do not compare your grief with that of others, as everyone is unique
- Surround yourself with supportive people
- Do not blame yourself
- Reflect on your memories and share them with others
- Write down your feelings if that helps
- Be patient and tolerant with yourself – recovery is not an overnight phenomenon.

Relief from stresses, the ability to talk about the experience, and the passage of time are important factors in the healing process. You must find a place for your loved one, which will allow you to go on with your life. You must, in your own time, come to the realization that life can and does go on. *iv*

i. Schlosser, E. (1997, September). A Grief Like No Other. The Atlantic Online.

ii. The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. (2005, November). Homicide Survivors - Dealing with Grief.

iii. The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. (2005, November). Homicide Survivors - Dealing with Grief.

iv. The Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime. (2005, November). Homicide Survivors - Dealing with Grief.