

Report on Victim and Survivor Issues in Homicide Cases

**A Report to the Governor's Commission on Capital Punishment
by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's
Research & Analysis Unit**

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REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Victim Issues and Concerns In Homicide Cases

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for Governor Ryan's Commission on Capital Punishment to provide additional information on homicide victim and survivor issues. It is hoped that this information is useful in the Commission's consideration of possible improvements in the way criminal justice agencies and allied entities in the victim service community carry out their responsibilities in such cases.

The report includes a statistical backdrop on statewide trends for murder offenses and death sentences; a brief review of relevant literature; findings from related research and analysis conducted by the Authority; and, recommendations from the Authority's Criminal Justice Plan for the State of Illinois, which deal with victim service issues.

MURDER IN ILLINOIS

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports, approximately 15,517 persons were murdered in the United States in 2000, which is equivalent to a rate of 5.5 per 100,000 persons. In Illinois, 891 murder offenses were reported to the Illinois State Police for 2000, or 7.2 per 100,000 persons.

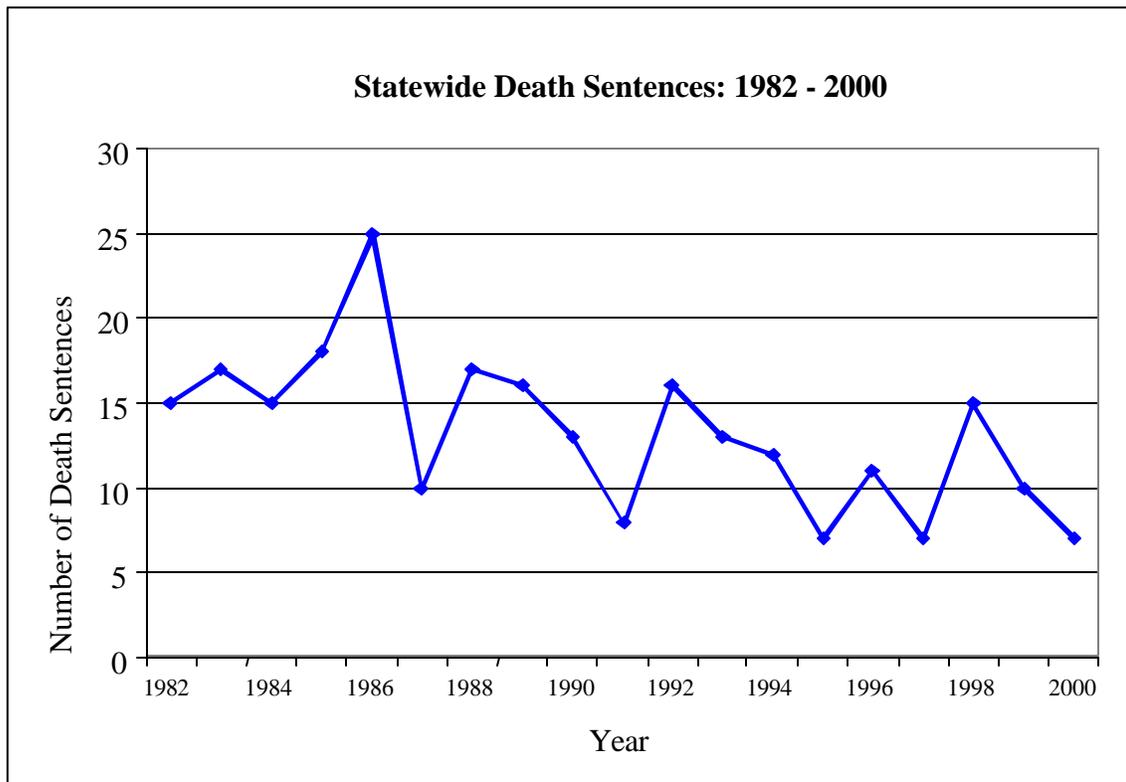
Figure 1



Since the early to mid-1990s, the statewide murder offense rate has decreased (see Figure 1). Moreover, the murder offense rate in 2000 was the lowest experienced in Illinois since 1982.

According to figures reported by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the number of death sentences handed down in Illinois courts during the same period also reflects a general decreasing trend (see Figure 2). In 1982, 15 death sentences were handed down statewide. In 2000, 7 such sentences were reported.

Figure 2



Despite declining trends, the fact remains that there are still many individuals in Illinois who are affected by the loss of loved ones in these crimes. Perhaps most importantly, reviews of relevant literature and recent Authority research indicate that these “collateral” victims of homicide – immediate family member, spouse, intimate partner, friends, etc. - present a host of needs when they come into contact with the criminal justice system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous literature has been reviewed with a focus on two questions:

- (1) What does it tell us about the needs of homicide survivors?
- (2) Are such needs being met by the criminal justice system or service providers?

While very little research has focused exclusively on survivors of homicide, there is a significant body of literature on the victims of violent crime generally, which helps identify needs and how they have been addressed.

Identifying the Needs of Homicide Survivors

It has been recognized for some time that the trauma of criminal violence has a profound impact. “Long after the physical wounds have healed, many crime victims continue to feel overwhelmed by the psychic pain of loss, powerlessness, low self-esteem, isolation, fear, rage – feelings that often are shared by their family and friends, as well as by the extended community” (Friedman, Tucker and Neville, 1998). The survivors of murder victims can suffer the same broad range of psychological and social injuries. A review of the kinds of services provided to crime victims and their immediate families illustrates the range of these needs.

The National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) identified 31 such services which Finn and Lee (1987) later classified into the six categories reflected in the table below. In 1997, Tomz and McGillis updated Finn and Lee’s original list, adding Post-Sentencing Services as a seventh general category.

CATEGORY	NEEDS
EMERGENCY SERVICES	Medical care Security repair On-scene comfort Shelter or food Financial assistance
COUNSELING	24-Hour hotline Follow-up counseling Crisis intervention Mediation
ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT SERVICES	Personal advocacy Landlord intervention Intimidation protection Referral Employer intervention Property return Legal/paralegal counsel
CLAIMS ASSISTANCE	Insurance claims aid Compensation assistance Restitution assistance Witness fee assistance
COURT-RELATED SERVICES	Witness reception Notification Transportation Escort to court Court orientation Witness alert Child care Victim impact reports
SYSTEMWIDE SERVICES	Public education Training Legislative advocacy

A number of studies have used victim surveys to identify crime victims’ needs and to measure the effectiveness of victim assistance programs. A 1998 San Diego Association of Governments

(SANDAG) study focused on the needs of violent crime victims (i.e., sexual assault, assault, domestic violence and family members of homicide victims). In 1997, researchers employed by SANDAG administered a victim survey designed to uncover the needs of crime victims in the San Diego metropolitan area. Consistent with previous studies, they found that over half of the follow-up sample experienced some type of financial loss (e.g., lost wages, lost property, and medical expenses), signifying a need for both short-term and long-term financial assistance.

In addition, this study found that crime victims' needs changed as their cases progressed through the criminal justice system. Immediately following the crime, security-related assistance was the most frequently reported need. One month after the crime, case information and referrals were the most needed service, and six months post-crime, emotional support was the most important need. Interestingly, although case information was the most frequently received service, it was also the most frequently mentioned unmet need.

Are Needs Being Met?

Evaluation research indicates that, generally speaking, assistance programs do not provide all needed services. Over one-half of all victims in the SANDAG study reported that all of their needs had been met. Although the majority of victims seem to be receiving sufficient service, many victims' needs remained unmet. In the six-month post crime sub-sample, 38 percent of the victims reported having unmet needs.

Jerin, Moriarity and Gibson (1995) used the list of "essential" services identified by Finn and Lee to evaluate the effectiveness of North Carolina's prosecutor-based victim assistance programs at meeting crime victims' needs. This list included 27 of the 31 services identified by NOVA.¹ The researchers found that only three essential services were provided by all the programs (referrals, restitution assistance, and witness alert) and that four essential services were provided by *none* of the programs (medical care, shelter, security repair, and paralegal/legal counsel). Although few essential services were provided by all of the programs, nearly half (13 out of 27) of the essential services were provided by more than 75 percent of the programs.

Recently, researchers from the University of Arkansas Little Rock used a "key informant" approach – victim service providers - to identify crime victims' needs. Victim service providers were asked about the services crime victims needed most. In response to the question, "In your opinion, are the existing services sufficient to meet the needs of crime victims in your county?" 74 percent replied that existing services were insufficient.

The five services that respondents identified most frequently as lacking were counseling, shelters (primarily for battered women), advocacy services, public education, and support groups. When asked to explain the primary reasons for the lack of services, respondents replied that programs

¹ The four services that were identified as non-essential were the three that fall into the category, system wide services. These services are public education, legislative advocacy and training. The fourth service deemed non-essential was assistance with victim impact statements.

were unable to offer the services that victims often needed, victims were often unaware of the existence of assistance programs, and it was often difficult for victims to travel to the program's location.

McEwen (1995) argues that there is a pressing need for victim assistance programs to reach out to special victim populations. Based on a survey of 319 victim/witness programs in law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, Hispanics, African Americans, Asians and Native Americans were identified as the special populations that victim/witness program staff must make a concerted effort to reach. This finding was also supported by the SANDAG study that showed that ethnic minorities were most likely to have unmet needs. According to McEwen, additional training in cultural sensitivity and recruiting and maintaining bilingual staff members are strategies that programs could adopt to better serve these populations.

A great deal of work has been done on the effect of victim compensation assistance, with the focus placed on the crime victim's satisfaction with the compensation program or the criminal justice system more generally. Elias (1983) investigated the victim compensation programs in New York and New Jersey. He found that fewer than one percent of all violent crime victims applied for compensation. Among those who did apply, less than half received an award. Of those that received an award, 80 percent were not satisfied with their award.

Smith and Hillenbrand (1997) argued that compensation and restitution programs hold promise for "making victims whole," but only a small percentage of victims benefit from such programs. Some of the reasons given include a lack of awareness of the program, the inability or unwillingness of offenders to pay restitution, the insufficiency of state funds to compensate victims, and the limits placed on eligibility for compensation.

In 1987, Davis reported the results of one of the few studies that investigated the effect of victim services on the material and psychological adjustment of crime victims. It is important to note the sample that Davis used in his study was comprised of victims of robbery, assault and burglary. Although he found that substantial psychological recovery had occurred for all victims in the first three months post crime, he found no evidence that recovery was greater for victims who received services than for those who did not receive services, consistent with results from a study done by Harrell et al. (1985). Davis concluded that most of these crime victims (victims of robbery, assault and burglary) do not suffer from such serious psychosocial disruptions that they cannot cope by themselves, and eventually they readjust over a period of days or weeks.

Many studies have been done on the effect of victim participation in the criminal justice process on "victim satisfaction," either with the outcome of the case or with the criminal justice system more generally. The majority of studies show that despite the many victim initiatives, dissatisfaction with the courts continues (Note 1987).

Elias (1983) argued that the limitations of New York and New Jersey's compensation programs and the subsequent dissatisfaction of victims' compensation awards increased victims' alienation

from the criminal justice system. Davis (1984) argues that victimization and the treatment that victims receive in the criminal justice system almost inevitably alienates crime victims. Davis found that among those victims who felt that their compensation award was adequate, their attitude toward the criminal justice system was improved and their likelihood of future cooperation was enhanced.

The effect of victim impact statements on victim satisfaction is another frequently studied area, yielding conflicting results. Two studies, Davis (1985) and Davis and Smith (1994) both found no effect of the filing of a victim impact statement on victim's level of satisfaction with the criminal justice system.

In contrast, Erez and Tontodonato (1992) found that filing a victim impact statement usually results in increased satisfaction with the criminal justice system. In a study published two years later, the reverse was found (Erez et al. 1994). This time, researchers found that filing a victim impact statement raises expectations that the victim can influence the outcome of the case, and when that fails to happen, victims' level of satisfaction is reduced.

There is little research on the effectiveness of victim assistance programs in encouraging future participation in the criminal justice system. One of the few studies conducted is an investigation of the experiences of crime victims who were in contact with a victim assistance agency in Northeast Ohio (Tontodonato and Kratcoski, 1995). Among other things, this research found:

- 48 percent of the crime victims surveyed responded that they would be likely to cooperate with the criminal justice system in the future;
- 20 percent of respondents replied that it was unlikely that they would cooperate with the system in the future, with the remaining 31 percent being unsure;
- There was a significant positive correlation between victim satisfaction and the likelihood of future cooperation. Victims who evaluated components of the criminal justice system (i.e., police, prosecution and courts) more positively were more likely to state that they would probably cooperate with the system in the future.

Early in the history of victim/witness programs, concerns were expressed over the placement of such programs in District Attorney's Offices (Young, 1997). Tomz and McGillis, in the second edition of Serving Crime Victims and Witnesses (1997), identify both the advantages and the disadvantages of prosecutor-based victim assistance programs, which are reflected in the table on the following page.

Some of the disadvantages that Tomz and McGillis identify are illustrated in studies of victim assistance programs. For example, Roberts (1987) found that most victim programs intervene days or weeks after the crime. By then, it might be too late to attend to the most pressing needs of the victim. Elias (1990), consistent with previous work done by Davis (1983) and Elias (1986), argued that victim/witness programs based in prosecutors' offices can promote dissatisfaction with the

criminal justice system by treating victims as prosecution witnesses, thus building false hopes regarding their impact on the outcome of the case. Focusing on the victim as a witness for the prosecution can also result in delaying the victim's recovery by making his/her needs secondary to the needs of the prosecution.

Prosecutor-Based Victim Assistance Programs	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ provide swift access to case information ✓ provide easy access to victims via charging sheets ✓ enable staff, through direct observation, to understand the criminal justice system ✓ provide programs with a mantle of authority and credibility in dealing with victims and other groups ✓ provide an opportunity to improve prosecutors handling of victims ✓ facilitate access to judges; facilitate inclusion of victim concerns in sentencing recommendations ✓ provide opportunities for court escort and witness reception center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ focus on victims in terms of their potential as witnesses, and not as individuals in need ✓ restrict services to only victims whose cases are brought to trial ✓ are limited in their ability to do on-the-scene crisis intervention ✓ restrict the opportunity of staff to act as victim advocates ✓ can create conflicts over confidentiality and disclosure ✓ can create pressure to prosecute or drop cases even if it is inconsistent with the victim's need.

Finally, an evaluation of North Carolina's prosecutor-based victim/witness programs (Jerin et al, 1995) concluded that these programs do little to meet the needs of most crime victims. This conclusion is supported by the work of Friedman et al. (1982) who found that improving household security in the aftermath of a crime and financial assistance were the types of aid most needed by victims. Roberts (1987) echoed those findings in his study of 184 victim assistance programs throughout the United States. He found that only 13 percent of programs surveyed offered security assistance and 24 percent offered financial assistance, which are the types of immediate interventions that victim assistance programs based in prosecutors' offices are typically unable to provide.

Summary

The literature in this area suggests the following:

- The survivors of homicide victims, like the victims of violent crime, present a host of needs when they come into contact with the criminal justice system;
- Crime victims' needs change as their cases progress through the criminal justice system;

- Victim service programs are not always able to offer the services that victims often need;
- Victims are often unaware of the existence of assistance programs;
- It is often difficult for victims to travel to a program's location;
- Victimization and the treatment victims receive in the criminal justice system can alienate crime victims;
- The filing of a victim impact statement raises expectations that the victim can influence the outcome of the case, and when then fails to occur, the victim's level of satisfaction is reduced;
- There is a significant positive correlation between victim satisfaction and the likelihood of future cooperation in prosecutions; and
- Prosecutorial-based victim assistance programs can overly focus on victims in terms of their potential as witnesses, not as individuals in need, effectively delaying their recovery.

AUTHORITY RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

The Chicago Women's Health Risk Study

Recent Authority research illustrates how homicide creates “collateral” victims that need services. In June 2000, the Authority published the results of a collaborative, ground-breaking study of the risk of serious injury or death in intimate partner violence, the Chicago Women's Health Risk Study (CWHRS). All of the 87 intimate partner homicides in Chicago in 1995 or 1996 (in which one of the partners was an adult woman) were part of the CWHRS. There were 57 homicides with a woman victim and a man offender, 28 with a man victim and a woman offender, and two with a woman victim and offender.

For 76 of these homicides, the CWHRS was able to interview at least one friend, family member, or other person who knew about the relationship prior to the homicide, or the woman offender herself. In our interviews with these homicide “proxy respondents,” we asked not only about the events that had occurred before the homicide, but also about the lives of survivors and witnesses after the homicide. This research supports the notion that murder frequently results in other victims who experience trauma and require assistance with their needs.

In 39 percent of the homicides, at least one child age 17 or younger was present. In 43 percent of the homicides in which the child survived, at least one of the children present “got help or talked to a counselor.” In addition, one child older than 17 saw a counselor, and two children who were not present at the homicide also got help. Of the children who got help or saw a counselor, it “was helpful” for 38 percent.

A child was more likely to be present when a man was killed by a woman (54 percent) than when a woman was killed by a man (32 percent). In at least one case in which the male intimate partner was killed, he had assaulted or threatened the child (see above). However, children were more likely to have gotten help or seen a counselor if they were present when a woman was killed (54 percent) than if they were present when a man was killed (30 percent).

In addition to the children who witnessed the homicide, in five additional cases the children were not present at the homicide, but found the body. In two cases for example, the children were asleep and found the body when they woke up. In all five of these homicides, a woman was killed by a man. In two of the five cases, at least one of the children “got help or saw a counselor.” In both of these cases, the person interviewed said that the counseling had been “helpful.”

CWHRS: Selected “Collateral” Victim Factual Situations
In the 87 homicides, four people were killed in addition to the intimate partner victim. Three of these additional victims were children. In all of the intimate partner homicides in which an additional person was killed, the intimate partner homicide offender was a man and the intimate partner’s victim was a woman.
The three children who were killed included a 17-year-old foster daughter, who was stabbed and bludgeoned to death, and the 6-year-old daughter of the victim, who died of blunt head trauma while her mom died of multiple gunshot wounds. In addition, after the mother was shot multiple times in the chest, her 6-month fetus was delivered by C-section, and lived only three days.
In the homicide in which an additional adult was killed, the offender shot his former girlfriend and her new boyfriend in the back of the head, after saying that if he couldn’t have her, nobody could.
In addition to the five “collateral deaths,” additional people were injured in six of the 87 intimate partner homicides, some very seriously.
One woman victim’s 13-year-old daughter was beaten, stabbed and left for dead, but survived. In another case, the offender, who had been briefly involved with the victim, saw her in a bar with another man, became intensely jealous, and tried to shoot them both. He shot and wounded another bar patron instead of the intended male victim.
Three children were injured as they tried to protect their mother. One offender’s 14-year-old daughter was bruised when she tried to stop him from beating her stepmother to death. Two children, ages six and seven, suffered bruises and nosebleeds, possibly from trying to intervene as their father beat their mother with a hammer and then strangled her with a cord. Both children were still in counseling two-and-a-half years after the homicide, because “they tried to stop their dad but couldn’t.”
In two homicides, people were not injured by the homicide offender, but rather by the homicide victim. One man was killed as he began to sexually assault his ex-girlfriend’s two-year-old, after having raped her. He had forced his way into the home and threatened to kill the child, another child living in the home, and the other child’s mother. Another man pulled a phone off the wall, striking his common-law wife as well as two adult family members who tried to subdue him.
Finally, there were at least three additional homicides in which, while no other person was injured or killed, someone’s life was threatened. In one of these, two witnesses were threatened as the offender drove over the victim repeatedly, and almost ran over the witnesses as well. In two other homicides, a woman was killed while holding an infant or toddler.

Child survivors include children other than those who were present or who found the body. In an additional 5 percent of the homicides, the homicide victim had “been reported for child abuse or

neglect.” For example, in one case, the victim “beat all five children bloody, and tried to smother them. All five were taken away.” Another woman victim was “very depressed the last few months” before her death “because DCFS had taken two of her children away from her.”

Only the victim and offender were present in 42 percent of the homicides. At least one adult was present, other than the intimate partners, but no children, in 19 percent of the homicides. Children were present, but no adult, in 28 percent of the homicides. Both adults and children were present in 11 percent of the homicides.

Thus, another adult was present in 30 percent of the homicides. Further, as we have seen above, at least some of those adults were injured. Some of the adults present were strangers, bystanders, or acquaintances. For example, one male offender tracked his ex-girlfriend to her place of employment, and killed her there. Her co-workers were present. In other cases, the adults present were close relatives. For example, a mother responded to her daughter’s call for help and ran to the couple’s bedroom in time to see her son-in-law shoot and kill her daughter while she was holding her baby.

When someone else, other than those present at the time of the homicide, found the body, it was most often a relative or close friend (59 percent). The police found the body in 29 percent of the homicides. In five cases (12 percent), the person who found the body was a stranger, an acquaintance, neighbor or other person.

Two of the adults who found the body received counseling, which the respondent said was helpful in both cases. Both of these people were close relatives of the victim. One of these adults, the victim’s mother, along with the family, “would have intervened earlier” but the victim “thought she could handle this matter alone.”

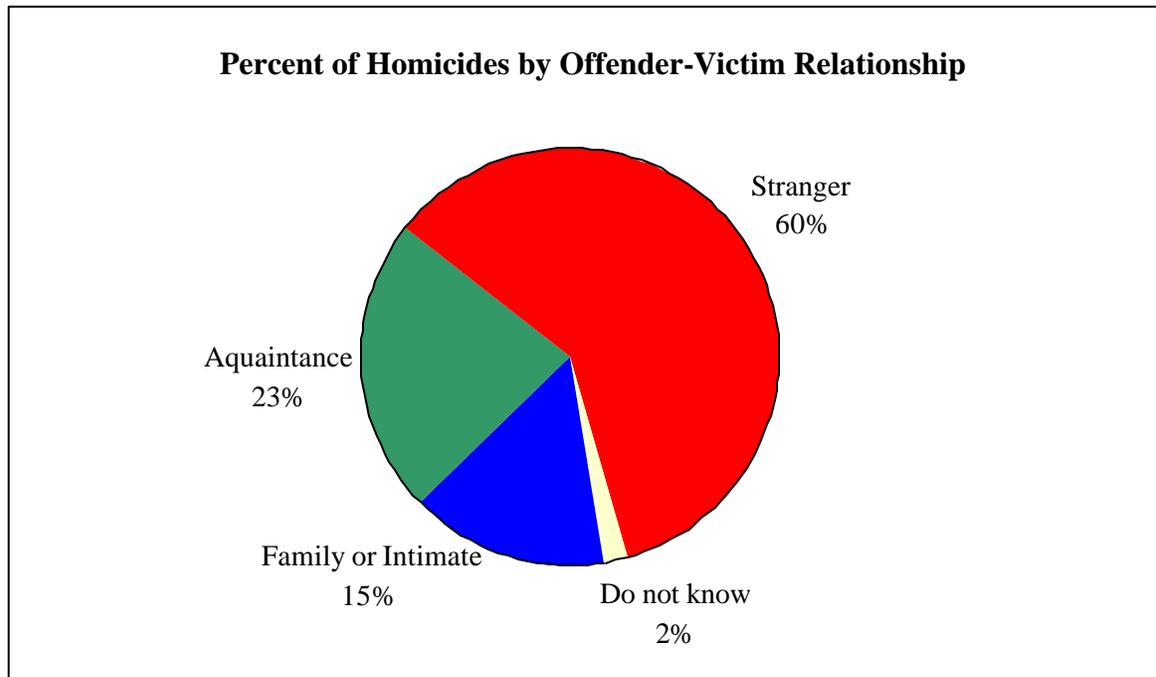
The CWHRS illustrates the important point that the homicide offender frequently causes additional physical and emotional injuries beyond their intended victim.

Cook County Victim-Witness Program Evaluation

The Authority recently carried out an evaluation of the Cook County Victim-Witness Program which, among other things, sheds additional light on how homicides affect individuals who lost family members or friends to homicides. While the study examined the needs of all crime victims, for the purposes of this report, we isolated only homicide cases and focused on the reported needs of the victims’ survivors in addition to what services these people received and whether they felt their needs were addressed.

The data presented were taken from a victim survey (interviews) administered as part of the Authority’s evaluation of the Cook County program and, therefore, readers should not generalize the findings presented in this section to represent all homicide victims in Illinois.²

Figure 3



The Respondents

A total of 65 homicide victims’ survivors completed interviews as part of the larger evaluation project. The average time between the time of the crime incident and the time of the interview was 33 months. Of these persons:

- Ninety-one percent of respondents were relatives of the individuals murdered. Additionally, four respondents were spouses and two were friends.

² In order to understand the impact of homicides on surviving victims, the data were examined using two different approaches. First, we examined the responses of homicide victims by computing the percent of responses per response category (e.g., the percent of respondents that said “Yes” to question A as compared to the percent of respondents that said “No” to question A). Second, we examined the responses of homicide victims in comparison to other violent crime victims by computing the percent of responses per response category for both homicide victims and other violent crime victims and then comparing the percentages. Other violent crimes included sex crimes, stalking, battery and robbery. These comparisons allowed us to determine what impact the crime incidents had that were unique to homicide victims as compared to other violent crime victims. It is important to note, however, that caution should be taken when interpreting the data, as we could only estimate whether there was a real difference between responses from homicide victims and other violent crime victims. This was due to the fact that the small sample size prohibited us from performing statistical tests to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the responses of homicide victims and victims of other violent crimes.

- Fifty-eight percent reported the crime involved one offender, while 27 percent reported that the homicide involved three or more offenders.
- The majority of homicide victims (60 percent) were victims of stranger crimes (see Figure 3).

The Impact

As already indicated, victimization can result in many different responses by homicide victims' survivors, including an increased fear of crime and post-traumatic stress. Such responses can affect the lives of these people in many ways. Homicide victims' survivors were asked several questions regarding the affect the crime incident had on their lives, both directly after the crime and at the time of the interview. (Table 1 attached presents the detailed findings for each question, which are summarized below.)

Directly After the Crime

Most homicide victims' survivors reported that their lives changed directly after the homicide. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents (68 percent) reported missing some work or school due to the crime incident. Most respondents (88 percent), however, reported that they did not have problems with their employer or school directly after the crime incident. Additionally, approximately 68 percent of respondents reported that they stopped going to certain places, leaving their homes at night or doing things they enjoyed because of the homicide. Moreover, most people (95 percent) reported that the crime made it difficult to live their lives normally. In fact, 62 percent of those that reported having difficulty in living their lives normally reported having "a lot of difficulty" doing so. Interestingly, the majority of respondents (68 percent) also reported some difficulty in their relationships with family members.

When responses from homicide victims' survivors on this issue were compared to the responses from other violent crime victims, it was found that they responded similarly to the questions asked. Only two differences were found. First, a greater proportion of homicide victims' survivors reported having "a lot of difficulty" living normal lives directly after the crime incident (62 percent versus 41 percent, respectively). Second, 56 percent of other violent crime victims reported difficulty in their relationships with family members, whereas 68 percent of homicide victims' survivors reported having difficulty in their family relationships.

At the Time of the Interview

Most homicide victims' survivors continued to report that their victimization was still affecting their lives in some manner at the time of the interview. In fact, almost all of these respondents (94 percent) reported that the crime continued to upset them at the time of the interview. Furthermore, 54 percent of the respondents who reported being upset at the time of the interview reported that they were "extremely upset" about the crime incident. Moreover, most homicide victims survivors

(58 percent) reported that they were still refraining from going to certain places, leaving the house at night, or doing things they enjoyed at the time of the interview because of the crime incident.

These “collateral” victims also reported that they were still having difficulty living their lives normally, although fewer reported having difficulty living their lives normally by the time of the interview as compared to directly following the crime incident (82 percent versus 95 percent, respectively). Moreover, most homicide victims’ survivors (62 percent) also indicated that they were still having difficulty in their relationships with other family members, although fewer respondents reported having “a lot of difficulty” at the time of the interview than directly after the crime (16 percent versus 40 percent, respectively).

When compared to other violent crime victims, a greater proportion of homicide victims’ survivors reported that they were still upset about the crime at the time of the interview (94 percent versus 79 percent, respectively) and a greater proportion reported that they were still extremely upset about the crime at the time of the interview (54 percent versus 34 percent, respectively).

More homicide victims’ survivors than other violent crime victims also reported modifying their behaviors (58 percent versus 42 percent, respectively). More reported having difficulty living their lives normally at the time of the interview (82 percent versus 59 percent, respectively) and more reported still having difficulty in their relationships with other family members (62 percent versus 42 percent, respectively).

Identified Needs and the Services Provided

As the literature suggests, crime victims may require many different types of services to help them address their victimization and meet their needs. These needs may include, but are not limited to, emergency services, counseling services and information services. This section discusses those needs identified by homicide victims’ survivors. (Table 2 attached to this report contains a list of needs homicide victims’ survivors were asked about during the interview, the number of persons that indicated that they had those needs, the individuals or agencies from which they received help to address these needs, and, finally, whether or not the needs were met.)

Data from the victim survey indicated that a significant percentage of eligible victims were not informed of Illinois’ victim compensation program. Thirty-three percent of sexual assault victims, 69 percent of battery victims, 38 percent of family members of homicide victims, and 60 percent of arson victims reported that they were not informed about the Attorney General’s victim compensation program by the victim-witness program staff. The data on who applied for victim’s compensation paints an equally bleak picture. Sixty-six percent of sexual assault victims, 68 percent of battery victims, 35 percent of family members of homicide victims, and 86 percent of arson victims did not apply for victim’s compensation.³

³ Not all violent crime victims are eligible for compensation through the Illinois Attorney General’s Victim Compensation Program. Violent crime victims are eligible if, “(a) Within one year of the occurrence of the crime upon which the claim is based, he files an application, under oath, with the Court of Claims and on a form prescribed in accordance with Section 7.1

The most frequently cited need by homicide victims' survivors was help borrowing money (27 respondents), followed by help with expressing troubling feelings (26 respondents), help obtaining court case information (23 respondents) and help getting counseling or therapy (20 respondents).

Several respondents indicated that they needed help obtaining legal advice (19 respondents), getting information from the police (18 respondents), and dealing with family problems (17 respondents). Most respondents reported that they addressed their needs themselves or with help from their family and friends. Fewer homicide victims' survivors reported that they obtained help from the victim witness program or other agencies.

At the time of the interview, 72 percent of the needs identified had been met and 12 percent were partially met. There was no identifiable pattern between the number of resources or agencies used by victims to address their needs and their needs being met.

Some homicide victims' survivors may experience stress directly following, or even years after, the victimization. Table 3 summarizes the responses for all of the questions that victims were asked regarding the affect the crime had on their lives.

Overall, most homicide victims' survivors reported experiencing stress since the crime incident. For instance, the majority of homicide victims' survivors indicated that since the crime they often thought about the crime when they did not mean to (87 percent), they felt alert or on guard (82 percent), they were unable to get emotionally close to others (80 percent), they saw or heard things that reminded them of the crime (79 percent), they tried to stay away from anything that would remind them of the incident (72 percent), they became angry if someone pushed them too far (71 percent), and they felt that they did not laugh or cry at the same things other people did (69 percent). About one-quarter (26 percent) of the respondents reported using drugs or alcohol to help them sleep or forget about the crime. Some of the respondents also reported having trouble sleeping because they were afraid (38 percent) or because of their dreams (44 percent). Almost all of the homicide victims' survivors (93 percent) reported enjoying the company of others.

When compared to other violent crime victim responses, more homicide victims' survivors reported stress in their lives. For instance, more reported that they felt that they did not laugh or cry at the same things other people did (69 percent versus 46 percent, respectively). More homicide victims' survivors than other violent crime victims reported that they saw or heard things that often reminded them of the crime (79 percent versus 67 percent, respectively), and more also reported thinking about the crime when they did not mean to (87 percent versus 62 percent, respectively).

furnished by the Attorney General. (b) The appropriate law enforcement officials were notified within 72 hours of the perpetration of the crime allegedly causing the death or injury to the victim or, in the event notification was made more than 72 hours after the perpetration of the crime, the applicant establishes that such notice was timely under the circumstances. (c) The applicant has cooperated fully with law enforcement officials in the apprehension and prosecution of the assailant. (d) The applicant is not the offender or an accomplice of the offender and the award would not unjustly benefit the offender or his accomplice. (e) The injury to or death of the victim was not substantially attributable to his own wrongful act and was not substantially provoked by the victim. (740 ILCS 45/6.1).

Coping Strategies

Some victims may use a range of coping strategies to help them deal with their victimization. Table 4 summarizes the responses for all of the questions regarding the coping strategies used by victims to help them deal with their victimization.

Overall, the majority of homicide victims' survivors reported engaging in positive coping strategies, such as praying for guidance and strength (98 percent), keeping busy with other things (93 percent), telling themselves things that help them feel better (90 percent), and concentrating on something that they could learn from the experience (75 percent). However, several also reported using less positive coping strategies, such as going over the crime again and again in their heads (92 percent), asking themselves "Why did this happen to me?" (83 percent) and criticizing or blaming themselves for what happened because of something they did or did not do (57 percent). Fewer homicide victims' survivors reported eating, drinking, smoking or taking medication to make themselves feel better (44 percent), criticizing or blaming themselves for what happened because of the type of person they are (44 percent), and taking the crime incident out on other people (38 percent).

Among other things in the Authority's research homicide victims' survivors reported:

- Praying for guidance and strength;
- Using negative coping strategies (e.g. eating, drinking, smoking or taking medication) to make themselves feel better; and
- Criticizing others or blaming themselves for what happened.

Summary

Overall, the findings of this research suggest that homicide victims' survivors were still reporting some impact of the crimes on their lives even after, on average, nearly three years had passed since the incident. Moreover, many reported still having significant stress as a result of the victimization. Although homicide victims' survivors did report improvements, our data suggest that, at the time of the interview, other violent crime victims were still faring better in terms of living their lives normally, leaving their homes at night, and in their relationships with family members.

The data also suggest that other violent crime victims reported greater improvements than homicide victims' survivors between the time of the crime and the time of the interview despite the fact that the average length of time between the incident date and the interview date was longer in the cases of homicide than the other violent crimes.

Importantly, our data suggest that homicide victims' survivors reported needing the services examined in the survey. Of those respondents who indicated needs, many reported obtaining help

from individuals within their social networks, such as friends or families. Moreover, most of the needs identified by the homicide victims' survivors in our evaluation were met.

Finally, although more homicide victims' survivors than other violent crime victims reported using more negative coping strategies, such as taking the crime out on others or eating, drinking, etc. to deal with the crime, most reported using positive coping strategies to deal with the crime.

Criminal Justice Plan for the State of Illinois

In 1999, the Authority implemented a new comprehensive planning process to guide its administration of federal grant funds. The process resulted in the adoption of a Criminal Justice Plan for the State of Illinois at the June 2001 meeting of the Authority. The planning process was guided by a tremendous amount of research, data collection and analysis, professional input and consultation which was highlighted by a two-day "*Criminal Justice Planning Assembly*" held in June 2000. Nearly 150 policymakers, service providers, researchers, private citizens, and government officials participated. Following the Assembly, six (6) advisory committees were formed: Drug and Violent Crime, Juvenile Crime, Offender Services, Victims of Crime, Community Capacity Building, and Information Systems and Technology. Ultimately, these advisory groups identified twenty-one different priority issues, set dozens of goals and objectives for each and recommended over 200 specific action plans to address them. In terms of services to crime victims and their families, and the accountability of the criminal justice system to them, the plan makes several significant recommendations.

First, the plan recommends that the State minimize the impact of victimization by ensuring the minimum provision of basic services to all victims of crime. There is a recognized need to strengthen and expand services to victims of crime to minimize the impact of victimization. A number of barriers to services were identified including:

- the lack of childcare services for children of victims receiving services;
- gender differences between victims and service providers for crimes of a sensitive nature;
- a lack of housing options for domestic violence victims;
- in small communities it is difficult to find someone to share sensitive information with and have confidence that the information will not become public;
- the lack of transportation in rural areas of the State; and
- the fact that some victims do not desire services from the criminal justice system.

The plan calls for the State to strengthen and expand basic services provided to victims of crime, and to develop additional services to minimize the impact of victimization. It also calls for action to

ensure that the basic service needs of victims of crime are being met. The plan recommends that the most effective services be identified and strengthened. Priorities for specialized services should be developed only after basic services are fully sufficient. The plan suggests that non-traditional resources be identified to augment existing ones. The plan also urges that funding agencies work together to identify any duplication of efforts and gaps in services and to also use the funds in ways so they complement each other.

The Authority's planning process also identified a lingering concern that accountability be a central principle in the justice system. First, the system must continually ensure that offenders are held accountable for their actions. Second, we must make sure that entities are held accountable for their programmatic efforts to respond to critical issues and needs. Lastly, the system must be continually held accountable for its actions to citizens, particularly to crime victims. The criminal justice system needs to be more accountable to victims and the community at large. In connection with this recommendation, three primary issues were identified in the plan:

- the lack of awareness of victims' rights by criminal justice professionals and victims themselves;
- the lack of recourse for victims who believe their rights have been violated; and
- the need to hold the criminal justice system accountable for its actions.

Among other things, the plan identifies the need to collect data related to decisions made at both the law enforcement and prosecution levels and for the development of a strategy to ensure victims are informed of available services and educated about their rights. There is also a continuing need to educate the public and criminal justice professionals about victims' rights and the availability of victim services. Finally, the plan calls for study of the establishment of a system of recourse for victims who feel their rights have been violated.

The planning process has helped the Authority, in collaboration with other state agencies and allied entities, to continue to designate grant funds and other resources in many of these areas to be responsive to crime victims and their families.

CONCLUSIONS

Homicide victims' survivors, like other victims of violent crime, present a host of significant needs when they come into contact with the criminal justice system. Murder frequently creates collateral damage in the form of physical and emotional harm. These persons' needs begin when the crime occurs and continues through the judicial process and long after. It is extremely difficult if not impossible for all of these affected persons' needs to be adequately met in each case, as programmatic resources and/or service providers may not be immediately available to respond to each person or need. Also, the system itself is not prepared to attend to the changing needs of homicide victims' survivors over time.

Table 1: Respondents' Answers to Questions on the Effect of the Crime Incident on their Lives

Question	Homicide Victims (N=65)	Other Violent Crime Victims (N=159)
<i>Right after the crime...</i>		
1. Did being a crime victim cause you to stop going to certain places, leaving the house at night or keep you from doing things you enjoyed?	n=65	n=158
Yes	67.7%	63.9%
No	30.8%	36.1%
Never goes out/ never does things	1.5%	0.0%
2. How much difficulty did your experience cause you in your ability to live your life normally?	n=65	n=156
A lot of difficulty	61.5%	41.0%
Moderate difficulty	27.7%	22.4%
Little difficulty	6.2%	23.1%
No difficulty	4.6%	13.5%
3. How much difficulty did being a victim of this crime cause you in your relationships with members of your family? Does it cause . . .	n=63	n=155
A lot of difficulty	39.7%	25.2%
Moderate difficulty	17.5%	13.5%
Little difficulty	11.1%	16.8%
No difficulty	31.7%	44.5%
<i>At the time of the interview ...</i>		
1. When you think about this crime incident, how upset are you about it? Are you . . .	n=63	n=155
Extremely upset		
Moderately upset	54.0%	34.2%
A little bit upset	25.4%	19.4%
Not at all upset	14.3%	25.2%
	6.3%	21.3%
2. Did being a victim of this crime cause you to stop going to certain places, leaving the house at night or keep you from doing things you enjoy now?	n=64	n=159
Yes	57.8%	42.1%
No	39.1%	56.6%
Never goes out/ never does things	3.1%	1.3%
3. How much difficulty does your experiences cause you in your ability to live your life normally?	n=65	n=158
A lot of difficulty	24.6%	17.1%
Moderate difficulty	32.3%	15.8%
Little difficulty	24.6%	25.9%
No difficulty	16.9%	41.1%
4. How much difficulty does being a victim of this crime cause you in your relationships with members of your family? Does it cause . . .	n=63	n=158
A lot of difficulty	15.9%	13.3%
Moderate difficulty	15.9%	6.3%
Little difficulty	30.2%	22.8%
No difficulty	38.1%	57.6%

Table 2. Needs Cited by Homicide Victims' Survivors

This table contains a list of needs homicide victims' survivors were asked about during the interview, the number of persons that indicated that they had those needs, the individuals or agencies from which they received help to address these needs, and, finally, whether or not the needs were met.

Need (# victims that said yes)	Help from VWAP⁴	Help from Other agency	Help from police	Help from family/friends	Take care on own	Was situation taken care of?
<i>Mental Health Services</i>						
Help with Expressing Troubling Feelings (26)	9	9	0	22	22	17-Yes 1-Partially 2-Ongoing 6-No
Help Getting Counseling or Therapy (20)	4	9	1	12	17	10-Yes 1-Ongoing 9-No
Help Dealing with Family Problems (17)	6	10	0	14	12	16-Yes 1-No
Help Obtaining Crisis Intervention Services (12)	2	5	1	6	10	4-Yes 8-No
<i>Information Services</i>						
Help Obtaining Court Case Information (23)	13	1	0	11	16	15-Yes 7-No
Help Obtaining Legal Advice (19)	6	2	0	11	16	9-Yes 1-Partially 8-No 1-Refusal

⁴ VWAP = Victim Witness Assistance Program

Need (# victims that said yes)	Help from VWAP⁴	Help from Other agency	Help from police	Help from family/friends	Take care on own	Was situation taken care of?
Help Getting Information from Police (18)	11	2	N/A	8	15	11-Yes 7-No
Finding out Next Court Date (9)	3	0	0	3	8	6-Yes 3-No
Safety Information (5)	3	2	0	3	2	4-Yes 1-No
<i>General Services</i>						
Help for Borrowing Money (27)	11	2	0	22	21	22-Yes 5-No
Help Getting Someone to go to Court (14)	2	1	0	9	11	12-Yes 1-Partially 1- No
Help Getting Transportation (14)	3	0	0	14	11	14-Yes
Help with Household Work (12)	2	1	0	11	8	9-Yes 3-No
Help with Landlord, Employer, School (8)	1	2	0	4	8	5-Yes 3-No
Help Finding Child Care during Court (6)	0	0	0	6	6	5-Yes 1-No
Replacing Stolen Property (5)	1	0	0	1	3	2-Yes 2-No 1-Refused
Repairing Broken Door, Lock (4)	0	1	0	1	3	4-Yes
Help with Other Property (4)	0	0	0	3	3	2-Yes 2-No
Help Finding Temporary Housing (3)	0	1	0	3	2	3-Yes
Help Finding Home in Safer Area (3)	0	0	0	2	2	3-Yes

Need (# victims that said yes)	Help from VWAP⁴	Help from Other agency	Help from police	Help from family/friends	Take care on own	Was situation taken care of?
Replacing Checks (2)	0	0	0	1	1	1-Yes 1-No
Help with Medical Expenses (0)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 3: Victims' Responses to Questions on Victimization-Related Stress

Question	Homicide Victims (N=65)	Other Violent Crime Victims (N=159)
Since the crime . . . I find that if someone pushes me too far, I am likely to become angry. Extremely true Very true Somewhat true Slightly true Not at all true	(n=62) 14.5% 22.6% 21.0% 12.9% 29.0%	(n=158) 12.7% 17.1% 24.1% 13.9% 32.3%
It seems that I do not laugh or cry at the same things other people do. Extremely true Very true Somewhat true Slightly true Not at all true	(n=61) 8.2% 14.8% 34.4% 11.5% 27.9%	(n=158) 3.8% 12.0% 19.0% 10.8% 53.8%
I have used alcohol or other drugs to help me sleep or to make me forget the crime. Extremely true Very true Somewhat true Slightly true Not at all true	(n=61) 3.3% 4.9% 8.2% 9.8% 72.1%	(n=157) 3.2% 4.5% 5.7% 8.3% 78.3%
I have been afraid to go to sleep at night. Extremely true Very true Somewhat true Slightly true Not at all true	(n=61) 4.9% 4.9% 23.0% 4.9% 62.3%	(n=158) 2.5% 6.3% 11.4% 7.0% 72.8%
I try to stay away from anything that will remind me of things that happened during the crime. Extremely true Very true Somewhat true Slightly true Not at all true	(n=61) 19.7% 26.2% 18.0% 8.2% 27.9%	(n=156) 11.5% 19.9% 15.4% 13.5% 39.1%
Things I see or hear often remind me of the crime. Extremely true Very true Somewhat true Slightly true Not at all true	(n=61) 14.8% 31.1% 16.4% 16.4% 21.3%	(n=158) 10.8% 14.6% 22.8% 18.4% 33.5%
I often think about the crime when I don't mean to. Extremely true Very true Somewhat true Slightly true Not at all true	(n=61) 23.0% 37.7% 19.7% 6.6% 13.1%	(n=158) 9.5% 17.7% 17.7% 17.1% 37.3%

Table 3: Continued

Question	Homicide Victims (N=65)	Other Violent Crime Victims (N=159)
I have difficulty remembering some things that happened during the crime.	(n=60)	(n=158)
Extremely true	5.0%	5.1%
Very true	16.7%	7.0%
Somewhat true	15.0%	12.0%
Slightly true	10.0%	8.9%
Not at all true	53.3%	66.5%
I am unable to get emotionally close to others	(n=61)	(n=155)
Extremely true	11.5%	11.6%
Very true	36.1%	29.7%
Somewhat true	21.3%	23.2%
Slightly true	11.5%	9.0%
Not at all true	19.7%	25.2%
I fall asleep, stay asleep, and awake only when the alarm goes off.	(n=61)	(n=157)
Extremely true	1.6%	7.0%
Very true	19.7%	14.6%
Somewhat true	8.2%	15.9%
Slightly true	14.8%	12.1%
Not at all true	55.7%	49.7%
Due to my dreams I awake in a cold sweat and force myself to stay awake.	(n=61)	(n=157)
Extremely true	9.8%	4.5%
Very true	4.9%	8.9%
Somewhat true	18.0%	7.0%
Slightly true	11.5%	4.5%
Not at all true	55.7%	74.5%
I enjoy the company of others.	(n=61)	(n=158)
Extremely true	24.5%	24.7%
Very true	34.4%	46.2%
Somewhat true	23.0%	19.6%
Slightly true	11.5%	6.3%
Not at all true	6.6%	2.5%
I fall asleep early at night.	(n=60)	(n=158)
Extremely true	8.3%	3.8%
Very true	8.3%	11.4%
Somewhat true	18.3%	21.5%
Slightly true	13.3%	9.5%
Not at all true	51.7%	52.5%
Lately, I lose my cool and explode over minor everyday things.	(n=61)	(n=157)
Extremely true	13.1%	3.2%
Very true	8.2%	5.1%
Somewhat true	13.1%	12.1%
Slightly true	8.2%	13.4%
Not at all true	57.4%	65.6%
I feel alert or on guard much of the time.	(n=60)	(n=158)
Extremely true	21.6%	21.5%
Very true	21.6%	32.9%
Somewhat true	31.7%	19.6%
Slightly true	6.7%	13.9%
Not at all true	18.3%	11.4%

Table 4: Reported Coping Strategies of Victims

Question	Homicide Victims (N=65)	Other Violent Crime Victims (N=159)
Went over the crime again and again in your mind to try to understand it.	(n=61)	(n=158)
Often	62.3%	47.5%
Sometimes	16.4%	20.3%
Rarely	13.1%	17.1%
Never	8.2%	15.2%
Prayed for guidance and strength.	(n=61)	(n=158)
Often	90.2%	55.1%
Sometimes	8.2%	20.9%
Rarely	0.0%	10.8%
Never	1.6%	13.3%
Asked, "Why did this happen to me?"	(n=60)	(n=158)
Often	71.7%	51.3%
Sometimes	6.7%	22.8%
Rarely	5.0%	9.5%
Never	16.7%	16.5%
Told yourself things that helped you feel better.	(n=61)	(n=158)
Often	65.6%	44.9%
Sometimes	23.0%	24.7%
Rarely	1.6%	13.9%
Never	9.8%	15.8%
Got busy with other things to keep your mind off the crime.	(n=61)	(n=157)
Often	72.1%	56.1%
Sometimes	13.1%	22.9%
Rarely	8.2%	8.3%
Never	6.6%	12.1%
Concentrated on something you could learn from the experiences.	(n=60)	(n=157)
Often	48.3%	51.0%
Sometimes	15.0%	23.6%
Rarely	11.7%	10.8%
Never	23.3%	13.4%
Made yourself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, or taking medication.	(n=61)	(n=158)
Often	19.7%	10.8%
Sometimes	14.8%	12.7%
Rarely	9.8%	8.9%
Never	55.7%	67.7%
Took it out on other people.	(n=61)	(n=158)
Often	9.8%	6.3%
Sometimes	16.4%	13.3%
Rarely	11.5%	7.0%
Never	62.3%	72.8%
Criticized/ blamed yourself for what happened because of something you did or did not do.	(n=61)	(n=158)
Often	27.9%	15.8%
Sometimes	21.3%	22.2%
Rarely	8.2%	10.1%
Never	42.6%	51.3%

Criticized/ blamed yourself for what happened because of type of person you are.		
Often	(n=61)	(n=158)
Sometimes	18.0%	11.4%
Rarely	11.5%	12.7%
Never	14.8%	10.1%
	55.7%	65.2%

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