



Resources for Those Affected by a Multiple Casualty Incident

The Pima County Attorney's Office seeks to ensure that victims, witnesses, family, and community members who were impacted by a multiple casualty incident have access to information and resources to help them deal with their stress and trauma.

Finding Help for Someone in Crisis

Get assistance and counsel from professionals. Several community resources are listed below, and trained professionals are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For a full list of mental health resources, please visit the Community Partnership for Southern Arizona's website: <http://www.cpsa-rbha.org/TraumaResources>

Emergency	911
Community Mental Health Crisis Line	(520) 622-6000
SAMHC (24-hr. Crisis, Mental Health)	Walk-Ins
2502 N. Dodge Boulevard (entrance on Flower Street)	
www.samhc.com/	
Information and Referral	(800) 352-3792
Red Cross www.redcrossarizona.org	(520) 318-6740

Effects of Crisis

Crisis is a normal reaction to abnormal situations and stressors. Whether it is the result of a crime, major incident, or one of life's many challenges, everyone experiences crisis reactions at one time or another. People experience crisis in response to an unexpected traumatic life event that temporarily overwhelms their normal ways of coping. ***Multiple casualty incidents are precisely the types of events that would be expected to produce a crisis response in many people***, including the victims, witnesses, family members, and loved ones, and even general members of the community.

Everyone responds differently to crisis situations. Reactions vary depending on a number of factors including severity and proximity to the traumatic event, other life stressors, past experiences with trauma, level of coping skills, values and beliefs, and access to interpersonal and community resources. ***It is common and normal for people in crisis to experience some of the following physical and emotional signs, symptoms, and reactions:***

- headaches and body aches
- dry lips and mouth
- trouble sleeping
- low energy
- gastrointestinal problems
- lack of concentration
- memory lapses
- difficulty in making decisions
- anxiety
- withdrawal
- anger
- intrusive thoughts or images

While most of these symptoms typically subside after a few weeks, individuals should seek professional medical and mental health services if they persist for more than a month because this could be an indicator of a more serious, ongoing problem, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Only a licensed mental health professional can diagnose and treat these disorders.

If somebody is suicidal, or wants to hurt themselves or others, it is imperative to access professional assistance immediately. Call 911.

Ways to Help Ease Crisis Reactions

There are a number of ways to help reduce someone's reaction to crisis. Some of the physical symptoms, such as headaches and dry lips, may be caused by dehydration. The body quickly dehydrates during a crisis due to crying, perspiration, and chemical reactions inside the body. *Thus, unless there is a physical injury, someone in crisis should be encouraged to drink room temperature water.* Cool or room temperature water is most quickly and easily absorbed. Ice water will give a traumatized person stomach cramps. Stimulants like caffeine, or sugared, carbonated, or alcoholic beverages are not helpful.

Non-strenuous exercise can be very helpful to someone in crisis. *People in crisis may benefit by being encouraged to walk, move around, and do simple physical tasks or other kinds of exercise.* Exercise helps various body systems return to a more normal state and helps alleviate emotional stress reactions.

People in crisis should be allowed to cry and vent. Helpers should allow this to happen naturally. It is best that you do not hand someone a tissue because this stops the flow of tears. Rather, have tissues nearby and let them reach for it when ready.

One of the most helpful things for people in crisis is simply allowing them the opportunity to talk and share their feelings. *Helpers should be active, supportive listeners.* Through talking, people in crisis begin to try to make sense of what has happened to them. Even if they are not making complete sense, it is important to allow them to talk freely and uninterrupted. *Helpers should avoid making judgments or giving advice.* Just listen and be present. Don't use clichés or try to point out positive aspects of a tragedy. This diminishes the impacts of the reactions the person is experiencing and is not helpful.

Empowering Victims and Survivors

Trauma often leaves victims feeling overwhelmed and powerless. Thus, helpers should:

- Let them make small choices. This is not the time to make major life decisions, but making small choices can help a person start to regain a sense of control.
- Ask how you can be helpful. Don't assume what works for you, works for them.
- Rather than "take care of" the person, encourage them to do for themselves.
- Provide accurate information. If you are uncertain, do not pass along guesses or misinformation. This can make a situation much worse.
- Predict and prepare. Help the person identify what may happen next and ways to cope. This is especially important if a person witnessed a traumatic incident or was a direct victim.

PCAO Services for Victims, Witnesses, and their Families

The Pima County Attorney's Office works closely with crime victims and witnesses and their immediate family members. We provide a variety of services to victims and witnesses, including crisis intervention, emotional support, information about victims' rights, victim compensation funds, and the criminal justice system, plus referrals to other community resources, case specific information, and court accompaniment. *Victims, witnesses, and their families should contact us, Monday-Friday from 8am to 5pm, at 520-724-5525.*

PCAO Services for Community Groups

In the aftermath of multiple casualty incidents, community members who were close to or knew the victims, either personally or professionally, are impacted. The victims and survivors touched lives across our community. We recognize that the groups and organizations with which these victims and survivors are affiliated (e.g., faith communities, places of employment, social groups, neighborhoods, etc.) may be experiencing their own crisis reactions and trauma. The Pima County Attorney's Office offers and can conduct *Group Crisis Intervention* sessions for these organizations. *If your group or organization could benefit from a group crisis debriefing, please call us, Monday-Friday from 8 am to 5 pm, at 520-724-5525.*

Pima County Crime Victim Compensation-

Violent crime can leave a devastating and lasting impact on our community. If you have suffered an injury due to a violent crime, witnessed a violent crime, or attempted to apprehend someone who committed a crime, and are in need of financial assistance for specific out of pocket expenses such as medical/dental costs, mental health counseling, funeral expenses, crime scene clean up, and some transportation and wage loss, there may be assistance available for claimants who meet eligibility criteria. The Crime Victim Compensation Program is a statewide fund of last resort that is governed by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission and administered locally in Pima County by PCAO. Please contact the Crime Victim Compensation Program if you would like additional information about eligibility criteria or how to apply at (520) 724-5525 or email victimcompmail@pcao.pima.gov. Applications are also available online at <https://acjc.hostedbykarpel.com/>

**Pima County Attorney's Office
Victim Services Division**

Contact us Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
(520) 724-5525