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THE EFFECTS OF CRIME ON IRISH VICTIMS:

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

by

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VOLUME 2 OF 2

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CHAPTER 5

NEEDS ANALYSIS STUDY

The following Needs Analysis Study used qualitative research methods to investigate the needs of crime victims. Three different groups of victims were investigated: families of murder victims, burglary victims and elderly victims. Needs were extracted from each group and discussed from psychological and organisational perspectives. Similarities and differences between the different victim groups were extracted. The different coping mechanisms that the victims used were discussed. Finally, recommendations were made in relation to Victim Support, the Gardai, the Social Services, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal, the coroner's court, the media and the Criminal Justice System, in order to relate the voiced needs of victims to the organisations they came in contact with.

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Needs Analysis Study

Section 1: Introduction

The *Crime Impact Survey* (Chapter 4) has investigated and discussed the effects of crime on victims in an Irish victim sample. Crime victimisation, in addition to, and sometimes in interaction with, pre-crime and post-crime variables can produce a range of different effects on victims. These effects in turn can produce needs, both psychological and practical, from support organisations, social agencies and statutory bodies.

The *Needs Analysis Study* aims to translate effects into needs by investigating the voiced needs of a sample of victims, by communicating those needs to the services that victims come in contact with, and by recommending ways in which existing services can alleviate the needs of Irish victims.

The possible association between need fulfilment and the level of victims' satisfaction with an organisation was described in Chapter 3 – *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey*. Although the results of the satisfaction survey did not indicate a strong relationship between need identification/need fulfilment and satisfaction, a good deal of previous research has indicated that the association does often exist (Oliver, 1997), and cannot therefore be ignored. It appears that fulfilling the needs of service users usually produces a higher level of satisfaction with an agency's service, with the result that needs analyses and service users' satisfaction surveys often become integrated in organisations' quests for achieving service quality (Gerson, 1993).

The *Needs Analysis Study* originated from both a psychological and an organisational perspective. From the psychological perspective, it is

important to learn more about the subjective emotions, cognitions and behaviours of crime victims. These can be translated into specific support needs and communicated to the organisations that exist to help victims, with a view to reducing psychological effect and impact. From an organisational perspective, carrying out a needs analysis study would highlight the experiences and subsequent needs of victims of crime within the criminal justice system. From these voiced needs, existing services could be improved and new ones invented.

In this way, the two perspectives complemented each other. Further knowledge of the effects of crime on victims would enable organisations to support and assist them. And if organisations are adequately supporting victims and striving to alleviate their needs, some negative psychological effects of crime may be avoided.

From the psychological perspective, then, the objective of the needs analysis was to build on the knowledge of the effects of crime on victims, but to translate these effects into needs that are concrete and salient, and are of specific relevance to those who work with victims.

From the organisational perspective, the objectives of the study were:

1. To increase and maintain at a high level, organisations' first hand knowledge of the effects of crime on victims and the subsequent needs that those effects produce.
2. To use the voiced needs of victims in deciding the amount and nature of services to provide, and to enhance the quality of service already in existence.

Needs Analysis Study

Section 2: Methodological Considerations

The *Needs Analysis Study* needed to be carefully and suitably designed. A review of the literature led to the conclusion that although needs assessments are becoming increasingly popular since the 1990s, there is no set, standardised method of carrying out a needs assessment, particularly in the field of victimology. Indeed, flexibility in approach can be seen as an advantage (Reviere et al, 1996).

Reviere defined a needs assessment as " *a systematic and ongoing process of providing usable and useful information about the needs of the target population – to those who can and will utilise it to make judgements about policy and programmes (p. 6).*"

Choosing an Appropriate Methodology

The assessment of victims' needs in an Irish context was to be a new area of victimological research. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, it was decided that a qualitative methodology would be appropriate to this section. Furthermore, it was agreed that a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the overall thesis would serve to enrich the data that were gathered from crime victims and strengthen the overall thesis design by providing a mixture of statistical and descriptive data (See Chapter 1 – *Introduction*, Section 5).

The idea of using qualitative research methods to investigate an issue is not a new one. Several recent studies and books have chosen to use descriptive data that they have gathered by qualitative methods (Neiderbach, 1986; Paradine, 1999). Particularly in relation to needs assessments, it has been reported that the needs identified by the qualitative approach are more

accurate and far more descriptive than those that could possibly be identified by a quantitative methodology (Kreuger, 1994).

Qualitative research methods do not involve numerical data or statistics. The unit of analysis is verbatim speech or behaviour patterns, where these are *not* translated into numerical quantities for future analysis. This can lead to a range of qualitative methods such as field and laboratory observations, interviews with subjects and group discussions.

It was decided that in relation to the needs of crime victims, individual interviews or group discussions would be the most appropriate methods. Individual interviews involve, as the name suggests, interviewing one subject on the topic of interest – his/her needs as a victim of crime. The group discussion involves taking a small number of people and interviewing them as a group. Because the topic of interest is, or should be, narrow rather than diffuse, these discussions about a specific topic are often referred to as *'focus groups'*.

It was decided that focus groups would be even more appropriate for investigating victims' voiced needs. Not only are they more cost-effective than numerous individual interviews, but the very nature of the group situation lends an extra dimension to the discussion. The interactions between the participants generate spontaneous discussion and ideas with the result that the focus group interview actually has a dynamic of its own. The end result of the discussion is a *Gestalt*-like phenomenon whereby the ideas generated by the group can be more fruitful than the sum of the individual interviews (Kreuger, 1994).

Focus groups are dynamic - they have their own energy, they facilitate discussion through the brainstorming of ideas, they generate more ideas than individual interviews. Focus groups allow the researcher to observe

social attitudes and behaviours rather than individual ones. Crime is a social phenomenon and it is important to attempt to study its effects in a social framework.

Tutty et al (1996) has suggested that it is ideal to use a focus group when
- insights are needed into whatever is being investigated
- ideas are needed. Total output can be more that the sum of individual participants due to the group's energy and discussion of ideas.
- the decision-makers place high emphasis on the comments of the target audience

Focus groups are, however, not without their disadvantages.

- Responses in the focus group situation have been shown to be more extreme than in an individual interview (Sussman et al, 1991; Fern, 1982; both in Tutty et al, 1996). In this way, some accuracy of data may be sacrificed.
- The moderator controls the interactions and even at that, there can be less control over a group discussion than over an individual interview.
- The data can be more difficult to analyse. Some people may talk over each other, some may speak unclearly, some may be far from the recording device, etc.
- There can be a lot of variance between the different groups.
- Focus groups cannot make statistical projections because qualitative research is not mathematical.

Several disadvantages can be controlled for by taking certain precautions, such as using a pre-focus group questionnaire to check for extremity of responses in the group situation, or by running focus groups in series to control for variance between groups, which will be discussed further, below. However, some of the disadvantages are inherent in opting to use a

group of people and to analyse the verbatim responses to open-ended questions.

In summary, certain disadvantages are necessarily incurred in gaining detailed, qualitative responses, but most of these disadvantages exist regardless of whether individual interviews or focus groups are the chosen method of research. It was therefore decided that a qualitative, focus group methodology would be used to investigate the needs of Irish crime victims.

Format of the Focus Groups

When using a qualitative interview method, such as a focus group discussion, there are three types of format to choose from: standardised, unstandardised and semi-standardised. The standardised interview is the most rigidly structured of the three. It involves drawing up a list of structured questions that do not allow much opportunity for digression, amplification of responses or explanation. The unstandardised interview is completely the opposite; it is unstructured and does not have a pattern that can be repeated during every subsequent interview. The semi-standardised interview method was deemed best for the focus groups of this study. It allows for a very basic structure common to all groups but it does not hamper the conversation or flow of ideas.

Previous studies have shown that certain conditions must exist to ensure the validity of the focus group results in their representation of the population sample (Reviere et al, 1996; Tutty et al, 1996).

1. The purpose of the group should be clear to all participants.
2. The interviewer should be skilled and experienced in facilitating group discussions.
3. The environment should be permissive and without pressure on participants to conform or reach a consensus.

4. The focus group should be as homogenous as possible with respect to participant characteristics.
5. The discussion topic should be carefully selected in advance. Indeed, the facilitator should be equipped with a pre-determined topic guide, from which topics are encountered in a logical order, yet appear spontaneous to the participants. The questions posed to the participants should be phrased in basic language to ensure that all participants understand what has been asked, and open-ended to elicit in-depth and descriptive answers.
6. Focus groups should be repeated in series, to be representative of the opinions of the population sample in question. The same facilitator, discussion structure and topic guide should be adhered to in all groups.

It is important, then, to carefully plan the focus group protocol well in advance paying particular attention to clarity of purpose, skill of interviewer, environment, homogeneity of participants and to repeat the focus group in series to ensure the validity of the results. It was decided to use all the above suggestions to ensure structure, validity and accuracy in the *Needs Analysis Study*.

It was decided to pose open-ended, yet specific, questions to the participants, avoiding language that was loaded or biased in one way or another towards satisfaction, dissatisfaction or difficulty. It was left up to the participants to discuss what needs they had, how they felt and what gaps in service provision they encountered. Closed questions (such as "Did you?" or "Were you?") were avoided, as this type of questioning encourages yes-or-no responses rather than fuller, more detailed ones.

Two-questions-in-one were similarly avoided; questions were to stick to a single dimension. An example of a two-in-one question would be: "What

support and information did you need from Victim Support?" Support and information may mean entirely different things and asking a two-in-one question can be confusing for the respondent.

It was decided to make use of cues during the discussions. Cues would be prompts known to the facilitator, and suggested to the participants if more specific answers in relation to needs were required of them.

Uncued questions were to be asked first and cued questions second.
Uncued question: "What did you need from the Gardai before the court trial?"
Cued question: "What *information relating to court procedures* did you need from the Gardai before the court trial?"

Kreuger (1994) has suggested the following focus group questioning structure, and it was agreed to use that structure in the *Needs Analysis Study*.

1. *Opening question* - factual, used to identify something(s) that participants have in common. In the case of focus groups with crime victims, the opening question was introduced by a few comments on the experience of crime, and then by asking individual participants what particular crime they had experienced.
2. *Introductory questions* to introduce the topic and to get the participants to reflect on past experiences, such as particular aspects of their crime experience.
3. *Transition questions*. These move towards the *key questions*. Through the use of transition questions, participants should be becoming aware of how other participants view the discussion topic.
4. *Key questions* - drive the study. They are the questions that should elicit the important responses.

5. *Ending questions* - designed to bring closure, e.g. "All things considered..."

There are two versions of the ending question:

a) Summary Question - "Is this an adequate summary?"

b) Final Question - "Have we missed anything?"

The ending questions ensure that all topics have been covered to the participants' satisfaction. It also controls for the possibility that the researcher has forgotten something important, or omitted to ask questions about a particular need.

Ethics of the focus group research method

There are important ethical considerations to make when conducting focus groups for research purposes (Tutty et al 1996).

1. *The confidentiality and anonymity of participants should ultimately be guaranteed.*

   Steps taken: To protect participants' anonymity, no identifying material appeared on tapes or transcripts. First names only were used during the discussion.

2. *It is important to make sure that questions will not be potentially distressing, traumatising or annoying to the participants.*

   Steps taken: The question style was designed not to make participants feel uncomfortable. The facilitator was alert at all times for signs of distress.

3. *Consent to use the data for research purposes should be obtained from all the participants.*

   Steps taken: A signed consent form was used, so that all participants were aware how the information gathered from the research was to be used. The consent that was given by the participants was therefore informed consent about all purposes to which the research was to be put. Two copies were made; one was

kept for the researcher's own records and one returned to each participant.

4. *During the focus group discussion, it is important to remind participants about confidentiality, and that opinions and ideas discussed in the group should not be disclosed outside the group.*

   Steps taken: The importance of confidentiality was stressed at the very beginning of the focus group discussion.

Recording the group

It was decided to record the focus groups, to provide an accurate account of what transpired during the discussion. Recording can be done by tape or by video. Whilst video allows non-verbal behaviours to be observed, it can be more unsettling and obtrusive for the participants. Believing that there was a possibility that some crime victims might still feel rather distressed after their experience, it was agreed to use a tape-recorder in the sessions rather than a video. Full written consent to record the sessions was taken from each participant.

Protocol of study

The schedule of the *Needs Analysis Study* was developed according to a suggestion by Tutty et al (1996) as follows:

1. Develop the nature of the investigation.
2. Determine the objectives of the research.
3. Begin with broad categories of topics relevant to the study.
4. Visualise the general format of the schedule.
5. Develop sets of general questions or themes.
6. Generate lists of questions for each of the themes.
7. Adapt the phraseology, level of language, subject matter and style of questions to the educational and social level of the subjects.

The nature of the research was to investigate the voiced needs of Irish crime victims.

The objective of the research was to learn about both the psychological effects of crime and the subsequent needs of crime victims from every agency that they come in contact with.

In other words -

- What do crime victims need?
- At what stage do they need it?
- From whom do they need it?

Of course, the term "crime victim" in itself is an extremely heterogeneous one. It incorporates victims of all offences known to the state as criminal; physical, psychological or sexual, domestic or non-domestic, causing injury, causing damage, causing loss or causing distress, reported or non-reported, recent or past. It would be impossible to run focus groups on every kind of crime that victims experience.

To this end, it was decided to run focus groups on the following victim categories:

1. Residential burglary victims

Burglary is a common crime in Ireland. It was decided to begin with a commonly experienced crime, to ensure a wide representation and variety of participants.

2. Elderly victims

It was proposed to investigate subgroups of victims, to see if their needs differed. Elderly victims of crime often have less social support or resources available to them and the effect of crime on their lives can be considerable. It was hypothesised that, due to their vulnerability, elderly victims could have differing types and levels of need to other victims.

3. Families of murder victims.

Crime often affects more people than the actual victims themselves and in no case is this more true than with the families of murder victims. The family of the murder victim becomes the secondary victim in this, the ultimate of all crimes against the person. It was felt important to highlight the needs of people, other than the actual victim, whose lives are devastated by crime.

It was originally proposed to run a focus group on **assault victims** a) because of the high levels of effect suffered by this victim group and b) to create a good mix of victims of personal and of property crimes. Unfortunately, however, not enough assault subjects could be recruited to make a focus group feasible, and the idea had to be dropped.

It was decided to run each focus group twice to increase the validity of the results. The total amount of focus groups conducted was to be eight (although without assault subjects, the number had to be reduced to six), from which common themes and ideas could be compared.

Within each focus group, it was agreed that homogeneity of participants would be achieved, where possible. It was considered important to have homogeneity with respect to a) crime experience and b) when the crime occurred.

Although it has been suggested not to mix the genders of participants within focus groups as men may dominate the conversation (Kreuger 1994), it was decided that such rigidity might prove difficult when actually organising the groups. In the end, it was decided to allow groups of mixed gender, once all participants were victims of similar crimes within similar periods of time.

The protocol for inclusion in each group was as follows:

Residential burglary victims

Victims of residential burglary

Lower age limit of participants 21; upper age limit of participants 59

Crime committed between 6 months and 12 months prior to focus group

Elderly victims

To achieve homogeneity within the group, it was decided that the group would consist of elderly victims of residential burglary

Age of participants 60+

Crime committed between 6 months and 12 months prior to focus group

Families of Murder Victims

Lower age limit of participants 21; upper age limit of participants 59

Crime committed at least 2 ½ years ago, to control for extremely distressed participants and to include families' needs to the court trial and beyond.

Within the exact specifications for participants some randomisation was allowed, to ensure a nonbiased cross-section of participants. The ideal size of the focus groups was between 4 and 8 participants.

A professional group facilitator and counsellor acted as interviewer in the focus groups. This was decided for a variety of reasons:

1. The skill of the interviewer is crucial to the validity of the results.
2. The use of a professional in the research could be more re-assuring to the participants, and may serve to alleviate concerns about the professionalism of the research methods.
3. In the event of any participant becoming distressed during or after the focus group discussion, the professional counsellor would have the necessary skills to handle the stress. It was felt to be important, when discussing an issue that might prove distressing to any of the participants,

that there would be an adequate system in place for participants to off-load their distress at the end of the session.

The *Needs Analysis Study* aimed to include a broad mix of participants. This would ensure a good mixture of backgrounds and education levels from which to extract the vocalised needs. Secondly, the study would aim to extract needs that are concrete and specific, and related to own experience. This ensures that needs are expressed first-hand, rather than being what other people think victims need. Finally, because all opinions are valid, yet different people will have different ways of expressing their experiences, it was decided that all needs, issues, satisfactions/ dissatisfactions and perceived shortages in service would be taken into consideration in the study

In the presence of the facilitator, a topic guide and questioning route was devised and agreed upon. Questions were kept clear and concrete, and simple, unambiguous language was used.

The **topic guide** focused on the psychological needs and the practical needs of crime victims from all the various organisations involved with them. The guide was structured as follows:

1. The crime.

- Each participant was asked to relate briefly his or her experience of crime.

2. The aftermath of the crime

- Psychological effects of crime.
- Psychological and practical needs.
- What agency or people were the needs from?
- Prompts or cues at this stage included: Gardai, support agency, family, friends or relatives

3. **Support agency**

- Discussion of their experience (if any) from a support agency.
- What was helpful, what was unhelpful.
- What were their specific needs from a support agency? (Emotional support, practical help, legal information, other information, needs at time of court trial)
- Prompts or cues at this stage included: Method of contact with agency, when support was offered, information needs.

4. **The Criminal Justice System**

- Views on Irish Criminal Justice System – areas of satisfaction and areas of dissatisfaction.
- Needs from that system
- Views on how that system could be improved
- Views on restorative justice
- Prompts or cues on the Criminal Justice System: Treatment of offenders, fairness of system.

5. **The Gardai.**

- Discussion of experience of the Gardai.
- Aspects of service they found good, aspects they found bad.
- What were their specific needs from the Gardai? (Emotional support, practical help, legal information, other information.)
- Prompts or cues at this stage included: Ease with which they could contact Gardai, ease with which they could access information, empathy and understanding shown to them.

6. **The Social Services**

- What were their specific needs from the social services?
- Views on what should be provided by a state social service.
- Information that victims need from the social services.

- Prompts or cues at this stage included: Emotional support/counselling, practical help, information.

7. Financial and Compensation Needs

- Comparison of experience of compensation within the group.
- Comparison of knowledge of compensation services available.
- What were their needs from a compensating body?
- Prompts or cues at this stage included: Amount needed, information needs, financial difficulties, when financial need exists most.

8. The Media (Families of Murder Victims only)

- Discussion of experiences with the media
- Positive and negative aspects
- Needs from media

9. The Coroner's Court (Families of Murder Victims only)

- Discussion of experience of the Coroners Court.
- Aspects they found positive, aspects they found negative.
- Needs from the Coroner or the Coroners Court, incl. information needs.
- Views on how the experience could be made easier for families.

10. The Court Trial (Families of Murder Victims Only)

- Discussion of experience of the court trial.
- Positive aspects, negative aspects.
- Resulting needs.
- Prompts or cues at this stage could be: Understanding (or lack of) court trial procedure, any difficulties with attending court, participation (if any) of family in court proceedings, support needs (link to support agency).

11. General

- Anything else or any other service that the participants would like to comment on.
- Any gaps in service that the discussion has so far overlooked.

- Any other comments from the participants.

The topic guide planned for a discussion of around 1.5 hours, this being the length of time that the researcher needed to cover each topic adequately, but without tiring the participants.

Recruitment of subjects

Subjects were recruited from outside the Victim Support database for two reasons. Experience with the *Service Assessment*, *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey* and *Crime Impact Survey* demonstrated the difficulties inherent in using subjects from within Victim Support, such as reluctance on the part of the volunteers to participate and the slowness in receiving names and addresses of potential subjects. Furthermore, it was possible that victims in contact with a support agency, like Victim Support, may have had needs that had already been met.

The families of murder victims groups proved to be the exception to the rule. Victim Support's "Families of Murder Victims Service" operates on an outreach basis to bereaved families, so most families open to the idea of contact with an outsider were already in contact with the Victim Support service. It proved almost impossible to find families who were bereaved by murder, willing to participate in a research focus group, yet not already in contact with the support agency. Although the possibility was recognised that the needs of these families may already, to a certain extent, have been met by virtue of their contact with Victim Support, it was decided to recruit willing participants from within the organisation's database. Happily, the reasonably small number of participants required for the focus groups meant that it was much easier to find subjects this time round.

It was decided to advertise in newspapers for suitable participants for the burglary and elderly focus groups. Advertisements were placed in both

national and community newspapers. The purpose of the research was mentioned in the advertisement and potential subjects were invited to contact the Victim Support National Office. Several weeks of advertising only resulted in seven responses. Some of these had misunderstood the advertisement and were not bona fide victims of any of the three agreed victim categories. After weeks of advertising effort, it was decided to approach the Gardai in the quest for subjects. The Garda Commissioner was briefed on the objectives and protocol of the study and he agreed to allow local community sergeants in seven Garda stations in Dublin to submit names of victims of residential burglary to the researcher.

Participants were contacted initially by the Gardai, and were asked if they would participate in a focus group in their local station.

Invitations to attend the focus group were addressed personally to participants. Information was included on why the focus groups were being held and why that individual's opinions were particularly needed. As an incentive to take part, participants were reminded that their contributions would be fed back to many organisations, thus improving services to crime victims in the future. Participants were contacted again immediately prior to the focus group to confirm and remind them about the group.

Piloting the groups

It was difficult to pilot the study without actually running some practice-style focus groups. Unfortunately, shortages in subject numbers meant that all subjects were needed for the bona fide discussion groups themselves. As an alternative, the pre-determined questions were shown to a mixture of Victim Support volunteers, who were familiar with the types of participants in the focus groups. Volunteers of different ages, genders and education levels were shown the topic guide and questions, and most agreed that the questions were easy to reply to and understand. Where some volunteers

appeared confused at the wording of the questions (two cases), the phrasing of the question was slightly altered.

Problems and difficulties

The main difficulty encountered in the *Needs Analysis Study* was in the recruitment of subjects. The Garda Commissioner sanctioned seven Garda Stations to assist with acquiring subjects. However, in reality, many of the community sergeants were unable to come up with the numbers of victims of burglary that would make running a focus group in their area feasible. It was suggested to subjects that they travel to the city centre, and attend a focus group in the Victim Support National Office, but many subjects felt that the journey was rather far.

In the end, the only Garda Station that came up with sufficient numbers of victims of any category was Dun Laoghaire, a suburb in South County Dublin. Two residential burglary groups and one elderly victims group were held in Dun Laoghaire Garda Station.

The two families of murder victims focus groups ran smoothly using subjects that were already known to Victim Support.

The operation of the focus groups

Five focus groups were run over the course of the summer 2000; two families of murder victims groups (held in the Victim Support National Office), two residential burglary groups and one elderly victims' group (held in the local Garda Station).

When the participants arrived to the focus group discussion, they were introduced to other members of the group and the facilitators. The professional facilitator further introduced herself and the researcher, who

acted as co-facilitator throughout, checking that all areas of the topic guide had been covered and that the tape recorder was working at all times. All participants signed the consent forms and were reminded about confidentiality with regards to the forthcoming discussion. Participants' attention was drawn to the tape recorder to verify that everybody understood that the session was being recorded.

In the two families of murder victims groups, topics to be discussed were written up on a flip chart, with a suggested time frame for each section. However, due to the fact that the elderly and residential burglary groups were held in the Garda Station, these groups were simply given a verbal outline of the discussion topics at the start of each session.

Although the professional facilitator was on hand throughout the session and afterwards, in case any participant became distressed, nobody appeared to become overly distressed in any of the focus groups.

The tape recordings were transcribed and themes were drawn from all five groups. Some of these themes were common to all groups and some were particular to certain groups.

The results of each focus group are described first, commonalities and differences being explored at the end. Quotes from each group are used extensively, but only to demonstrate the points that the subjects made. Each effect of crime, subsequent need, or voiced issue is followed by between one and three quotations, depending on how popular each point was amongst the group. This was the first needs analysis study carried out on victims of crime in Ireland. It was therefore decided, upon reading the data, that all the points that the subjects made were important, both from a psychological and an organisational viewpoint. The result is a conglomerate of effects, needs and issues that a) are important to the

victims, b) further our understanding of the psychological effects and subsequent needs of victims, and c) raise the level of awareness of victims' needs among all the organisations they come in contact with.

Needs Analysis Study

Section 3: Results of Families of Murder Victims' Focus Groups

The families of murder victims' (FMV) focus groups produced both longer transcripts and more voiced needs than the elderly or burglary groups.

FMV Group 1 consisted of 10 participants.

Participant 1 (P1): Sister of male murder victim, 20s age group.

Participant 2 (P2): Sister of male murder victim, 20s age group. Sister of P1.

Participant 3 (P3): Brother of female murder victim, 50s age group.

Participant 4 (P4): Sister in law of female murder victim, 50s age group. Wife of P3.

Participant 5 (P5): Mother of male murder victim, 60s age group.

Participant 6 (P6): Brother of male murder victim, 30s age group.

Participant 7 (P7): Partner of male murder victim, 20s age group.

Participant 8 (P8): Partner of male murder victim, 30s age group.

Participant 9 (P9): Sister in law of male murder victim, 30s age group. Sister of P8.

Participant 10 (P10): Sister of male murder victim, 20s age group.

FMV Group 2 consisted of 4 participants.

Participant 1 (P1): Partner of male murder victim, 60s age group.

Participant 2 (P2): Son in law of female murder victim, 50s age group.

Participant 3 (P3): Daughter of female murder victim, 50s age group. Partner of P2.

Participant 4 (P4): Mother of male murder victim, 40s age group.

All participants were immediate family members of the deceased. FMV Group 1 ran for over two hours, despite the facilitator's efforts to contain the discussion. Participants were eager to speak and, due to the large number of participants within the group, it took longer than anticipated to go through the topic guide. FMV Group 2 ran for an hour and three-quarters, again due to the eagerness of the participants to contribute to the discussion.

The allocation of participants to each FMV focus group was arbitrary, therefore it was decided not to describe their voiced needs in two separate sections. It was inevitable that some different ideas would be generated in each different group, but it was felt that these ideas were due to different individuals rather than the fact that those individuals happened to sit in one group rather than another. Needs are therefore described in one single chapter below. Where specific quotes are used, however, the participant and his/her group number have been identified.

Participants voiced their feelings during the discussion, and spoke about the psychological effects of murder.

- General psychological effects, including initial reactions and loss of control
- Emotional effects including anger and fear
- Behavioural effects
- Mental health effects
- Coping mechanisms
- Effect of murder on children and the need for child support
- General support needs in the aftermath of the murder

Practical needs, dissatisfactions and/or shortcomings in service provision were voiced according to the topic guide.

- Victim Support and the organisation's support group.
- The Criminal Justice System in Ireland, including victims' awareness of how it works, bail, waiting list for cases to called to trial, early release of offenders, perceived inequality between how the accused and the family of the deceased are treated, the need to have a say throughout the entire process, restorative justice and attitudes towards offenders.
- The court trial, including support during the trial, defamation of the deceased's character in court, lack of defence of the deceased's character, preparation for trial, information about what to expect, need to review statements in advance, financial help during the trial and inequalities surrounding same.
- The Gardai, including breaking the news, identifying the body and information needs.
- The Media
- Social Services
- The Coroner's Court
- Financial and Compensation Needs

The data generated by the families of murder victims' focus groups appear as quotations in the following section. Further commentary and interpretation of the data can be found in Section 4 – Discussion and Recommendations.

Psychological Effects

General psychological effects of murder

Murder had a huge effect on the bereaved families. Each participant described what it was like to lose a family member through murder.

"It's different...I know it's a shock even if someone gets knocked down on the road, or dies suddenly. But it's totally different when you're murdered. It doesn't matter what anybody says, because I've been through it. There are quite a lot of deaths, but the murder one is the worst of the lot. Because you can cope with natural death or accidental death, but taking somebody's life like that, you just cannot cope with it. And, you know, you are crying out for help." (FMV1-P8)

The effects of the murder on the victim's family seemed to be varied, prolonged and severe. The grief of losing a family member seemed to manifest itself in different ways in different participants and varied from family to family.

"My family have never spoken about it." (FMV1-P6)

The effects generally seemed to be chronic, lasting anything from months to years.

"In (my wife's) case, it happened in her mother's front room. And we had to scrub the carpet to get rid of the blood stains. It's very difficult, you know? I mean, you can't put a thing like that away. You're reminded of it any time you go into a certain area." (FMV2-P2)

"I was afraid to go out. I was afraid to go anywhere, you know, my nerves were gone. I was...I'm a different person completely. I was never like this, you know what I mean? I've changed. My children are different with me. I used to be happy and jolly...we were happy.

...I wanted to go to sleep and I wanted to die...And I was screaming crying. Every time (the Victim Support volunteer) met me I was crying and crying. I thought I couldn't cope...this was going on for three/four months." (FMV2-P1)

One participant described how his wife behaved in the year following the murder of her mother.

"For the first year, (it was like) there was no-one there at all. She wasn't around for the first year, there was nobody there." (FMV2-P2)

Another participant became physically ill.

"(The Gardaí) kept coming down to see if I was all right and all. Cause I was very, very ill after this. I was very ill. I went like that (indicating upright finger)." (FMV2-P1)

Loss of trust in others was mentioned.

"I'm afraid to let anyone get close to me. I'm afraid that, say you were talking to me, I'd be afraid that you were trying to come to close, get close to me, you know, to be my friend. I'd never trust anybody as a friend like that. After what's after happening, you know." (FMV2-P1)

The initial reaction to learning about the murder was described by most participants. It was invariably one of intense shock.

"I think there's so much shock, initially, when this happens." (FMV1-P6)

"And (the Garda) says there's after being an accident. And I says, 'How bad?' And he just said, 'He's dead.' Jesus. And I started going funny." (FMV1-P9)

Another participant remembered feeling angry with the Garda who broke the news.

"My mother just collapsed...(the Garda) was very young, and it was unfair to be abusive towards him, but when you are so caught up in your own emotion, you don't actually feel what he's feeling." (FMV1-P10)

Many participants did not feel that they played an active process in the proceedings following the murder. Indeed several felt a loss of control over what was happening.

A mother of a murder victim described the difficulty she had in viewing the body of her son.

"And they told us (my son) was critical, and I didn't see him for two days, the guard wouldn't even let me look at him. I couldn't see him, I couldn't touch him, it was like nothing to do with me. I was pushed aside. Then they just took my husband away and the guards said to identify him. And my husband said to me, 'You don't want to see him (because he's so hurt)"...I kept saying please, I didn't know what was going on after that. But (the detective) was the one who got me the permission eventually, because I kept saying I don't want to talk to anybody, I didn't want to know anything that was going on, just to see him. And they let me see him, eventually. I got permission... But there's another place where people can go and take the decision out of your hands and they think they're doing the right thing for you...These are things that people take out of your hands." (FMV1-P5)

"Did anyone do anything that was harmful, or that you wish people wouldn't do?" (Researcher)

"Taking decisions." (FMV1-P5)

"Telling you what you can and can't see." (FMV1-P10)

Some participants explained how going to all the court hearings helped her family to feel more in control.

"You feel as if you're in control as well as they are. You have to be in control. It's the same way as you have to be allowed to decide what you want to hear, what you want to see. You know yourself, and for a lot of it, you're just satisfied with something inside. It was like sitting in on (the Pathologist's report), or whatever, I had to do that. I had to do that for myself and I needed to hear that." (FMV1-P2)

"We went to every single sitting, there was about 7, but we went to every single one." (FMV1-P10)

"You see, it's taken out of your hands completely, even though you're the family...It is, it's taken away from you and you're not brought into it at all, you're only told the day that it's going to be in court." (FMV2-P4)

Perhaps as a result of feeling out of control of the situation, some participants also voiced a need to have their say in relation to the murder.

"We didn't feel we were treated very well in the court system itself. We didn't get a chance to say anything about (the deceased) or his character, everything was all to do with *him*. And at the last minute, then, the Victim Impact Statement was offered to us, which was grand, but I said, 'I should have seen this before now.' " (FMV1-P5)

This participant appreciated the use of the Victim Impact Statement, as her way of having a say in how the family had been affected.

Emotional Effects

The emotional effects mentioned most frequently were anger and fear.

"I always feel that, anyone that I've spoken to that has had someone murdered, everybody seems to be the same. There should be somewhere you can go to get rid of all the anger. The anger never goes away...I just feel that everybody must feel angry for a while, and where do you go at the end of it? Where do you go?" (FMV2-P3)

"I've terrible anger in me." (FMV2-P1)

Anger was caused in some cases by the criminal justice system.

"My brother-in-law was murdered and we've just been living in hell. We're really very angry with the whole system." (FMV1-P8)

Sometimes it was manifested towards the offender.

"I'll kill her if I see her. She's dead...And I don't care if I get locked up." (FMV2-P1)

Only one participant said that she did not feel angry.

"I don't, no. Because you're actually tormenting yourself, you know? It's just like worry. Worry doesn't help you, so you've just got to try and tell yourself, 'Forget about the anger, get on with your life.' And that's it. Really and truly." (FMV2-P4)

A wife of a murder victim felt frightened in the aftermath of the murder.

"I was frightened as well, you know." She described to the group how she slept downstairs in the sitting room with her two daughters for months after the murder.

A mother of a murder victim was fearful of what would happen when the offender was released from prison.

"I'm just living in fear of him coming back out again cause I've got four sons at home and two
daughters." (FMV1-P5)

Another participant was fearful coming up to the court trial.

"It's, you know, going to be really difficult – it's coming very close now and I'm getting really scared, you know, about the whole thing.

Behavioural effects

General behavioural disturbances included not eating, staying up at night, having nightmares, constantly crying, sleep disturbances, behaving as though in shock and generally behaving out of character.

"(My husband) had another sister who was very close to (the deceased), there was only a year between them, and she wouldn't go outside the door for three years after Patricia was killed. She gave up all her friends and all, and the only time she would go out would be with her mother and father...(The family members) do, they totally change, I don't think they're ever the same. I mean, even (the deceased's) father, in the pub that he drank, every night he'd come home drunk and he'd have a different person in his head each night....And three days later it'd be someone else he'd be going out to kill." (FMV1-P4)

"I wasn't eating, I wasn't going to bed, I was sitting up, I was having nightmares, I was screaming...Every time Maura met me I was crying and crying, you know, at the time, you know. I thought I couldn't cope, you know." (FMV2-P1)

"During the day, just say you were my visitors, and yous come in, and okay, I'd be going like that. (Lowers her head and closes her eyes, imitating sleep.) Dozing off. But the minute yous go to go, I'd come alive. You know that kind of a way?

"I was still having nightmares, even though I was taking the anti-depressants." (FMV2-P1)

"I don't think I knew what I was doing." (FMV2-P3)

"She wasn't around for the first year, there was nobody there." (FMV2-P2)

Avoiding going out was a common behavioural effect.

"David had another sister who was very close to Patricia, and she wouldn't go outside the door for three years after Patricia was killed. She gave up all her friends and all, and the only time she would go out would be with her mother and father." (FMV1-P4)

"But I was afraid to go out, I was afraid to go anywhere, you know, my nerves was gone, I was... I'm a different person completely." (FMV2-P1)

Some participants described how they had subsequently altered previous habits.

"But I know my daughter, her boyfriend and my other daughter and her boyfriend were all living in the sitting room, they did that for months, sleeping with the pull-down beds and all in the sitting room. No one would go up the stairs, because you look out the window. They're afraid to look out the window cause that's where Daddy was murdered.

"I'm never going to that bedroom again, I get the same... No, no, I'm not going up there, I can't go up there..." (FMV2-P1)

One participant had had to move away from the area where the murder had taken place.

"I lived across the road from (the perpetrators), six people, and then I started getting victimised by them as well. So, I had to move away from my area." (FMV1-P7)

Some participants described ritual behaviour, where certain behaviours were constantly repeated.

"I visited the grave every goddamn day. Every day for over a year I went down and I nearly had a heart attack if I didn't get down." (FMV2-P4)

"I think our whole life centred around the date of the court. What date was (the offender) coming up to court? And then we'd go to court and (the offender) would be too ill to attend court and so, we'd go home and maybe take to the bed again. And I think I'd be dead today if Maurice hadn't been there, cause I would have drank myself to death."
(FMV2-P3)

Mental health effects

Effects on mental health included suicidal feelings, depression and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Several participants were prescribed medication for their illness.

"We needed someone to step in because, with my husband, I was going cuckoo, completely gone...And so the poor child had...a suicidal mother." (FMV1-P9)

"I wanted to go to sleep and I wanted to die...(the Victim Support volunteer) gave me great support. She kept talking and talking to me, trying to talk me out of things that I thought I was going to do...I wanted to do things and she kept saying, 'What about your children? (The deceased)

wouldn't want you to that, now. He wouldn't want you to do all this." (FMV2-P1)

Several received medical care following the murder, describing counselling, medication and even Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

"The doctors actually said that (my son) has the same syndrome that I got...that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder." (FMV1-P9)

"And I had to go to psychiatrists for the simple reason that my health was going down really rapid. I wasn't eating, I wasn't going to bed, I was sitting up, I was having nightmares...(the family) all wanted to be with me, they were afraid that something would happen to mammy. So, I had to go to psychiatrists and they had to treat me, giving me tablets as well." (FMV2-P1)

"Like that too, I was on Valium. And I think I went back to work after a few weeks, so I'd go one day and I mightn't go the next day. And people couldn't understand me because I used to speak very fast, they told me this afterwards, that I'd be flying through, everything was fast, fast..." (FMV2-P3)

Coping mechanisms

In view of all the difficulties, effects and needs experienced by families of murder victims, how do they cope in the aftermath of murder? A few participants mentioned how they got through the loss.

"I visited the grave every goddamn day. Every day for over a year I went down and I nearly had a heart attack if I didn't get down. And then, as time went on, I cut it down to maybe every second day, every third day, every week and so on. And that's the way it went on, you know...You never, ever, ever really kind of accept it, but it does help you, you know

...I've coped with it as well as I can. I talk to him a lot, I feel he's helping me a lot." (FMV2-P4)

The same woman described how she coped with her worry and anger.

"I don't (feel angry), no. Because you're actually tormenting yourself, you know? It's just like worry. Worry doesn't help you, so you've just got to try and tell yourself, 'Forget about the anger, get on with your life.' And that's it. Really and truly." (FMV2-P4)

Perhaps this was due to the fact that this participant believed her son was in a safe place now.

"He's in a safe spot, actually. Or she. They're in a safe spot. They can't be harmed any more. I keep saying to myself that nobody can touch him any more." (FMV2-P4)

Looking at the positives in a situation could be seen as a coping mechanism, where an individual seeks something good in what has happened or "looks on the bright side" in order to come to terms with what has happened.

Another mentioned the help of Victim Support.

"I wanted to go to sleep and I wanted to die...(the Victim Support volunteer) gave me great support. She kept talking and talking to me, trying to talk me out of things that I thought I was going to do...I wanted to do things and she kept saying, 'What about your children? (The deceased) wouldn't want you to that, now. He wouldn't want you to do all this." (FMV2-P1)

Many participants approached the researcher at the start and the finish of the focus groups, to say that they were glad to be able to possibly help others in the future with the information they were providing. Helping others could be seen as a coping mechanism.

"It's the likes of us who can start the changing. Victim Support are very good and they're here for backup, but I mean, people need to know that things do need to be changed. It's probably going to be too late for most of us in the room, but we can help." (FMV1-P8)

Coping mechanisms are further explored at the end of the chapter.

Effect of murder on children

Several participants also described the effect that the murder had had on the children, and the support that they felt the children needed.

"Well, I've got three kids that are still running around. (Pause) Actually, somebody said to me today in school, 'What's the story with this child?' And I said, 'What do you mean, what's the story with him?' And they said, 'Have you done a psychological assessment on him?'...and I just have to deal with this crazy child.

But, I mean, that child, he needed support right from the very word go. The doctors actually said he has the same syndrome that I got, but that it was coming out in a different way, that post-traumatic stress disorder that he has, but it's not recognised in him because he's only 8. And like, he's just a brat. He's bold, he's crazy and I don't know what to do with him.

My (other) kid is 15 now and he hasn't been to school in over a year. And the year before that, we think that he mitched...He started threatening he was going to commit suicide" (FMV1-P9)

"I had that problem years ago too, when (my sister-in-law) was killed. Our daughter, she was six or seven, she was really attached to (the deceased). And just by accident she found out that (the deceased) was actually killed.

And we were greeted with, 'My auntie's gone, a strange man killed her.' And we got, 'I thought strange men didn't go for big teenagers,' that's what

we got. And we'd silence for about 2 days after that. ...And then all of a sudden, after a week, she came home from school, happy as larry, and she was, 'I'm not sad any more,' she said, '(the deceased) is back.' 'Is she?' I said, she said, 'Yeah.' She said, 'She's with me.' And for four solid years we had (the deceased), living with us day and night. She slept with her, she went to school with her, you couldn't put anybody in the seat, nobody was allowed to sit beside her, she'd come in to us during the night saying, 'Mam, she's messing in the bed,' and we'd have to go in...She was terrifying me.

I ended up having to bring her to Our Lady's (Children's Hospital). And that's how she coped." (FMV1-P4)

Support needs

Participants spoke of their need for support in the aftermath of the murder. Many expressed a wish for support to be offered to them.

"No-one came knocking on the door to give help, including the church and that, we had to go searching." (FMV1-P1)

"There was nobody there." (FMV1-P10)

A daughter of a murder victim described how angry she was, and wished there was someone who could help her with the anger.

"I always feel that, anyone that I've spoken to that has had someone murdered, everybody seems to be the same. There should be somewhere you can go to get rid of all the anger. The anger never goes away...I just feel that everybody must feel angry for a while, and where do you go at the end of it? Where do you go?" (FMV2-P3)

Some participants felt that other people did not understand what they were going through and didn't know how to react. One brother of a murder victim described his experience:

"My main grievance really is that I was training as a psychiatric nurse and my mother was a psychiatric nurse as well. And the hospital, they were one of the top hospitals in Dublin and I got no support whatsoever. They just seemed to shy away from it all, the murder issue. Murder is such a tragic incident and they just don't know how to cope with it." (FMV1-P6)

"Did you feel that anybody understood what you were going through?" (Facilitator)

"No." (FMV1-P6)

"No-one wanted to know, really. Not that I'd say they didn't want to know, but there was nobody there, just nobody....(My sister) was in touch with (the Gardai) all right, but I was running around after her, and there was no one there for me to turn around." (FMV1-P8)

The lack of support offered to them in the aftermath of the murder seemed to be an issue with many participants. Some felt very let down by the people who had not offered support. A mother whose son was murdered abroad expressed her surprise at the lack of support offered in Ireland.

"The priests never came near me for at least three days. One of my friends...got on to some place anyway...and I had about three or four priests at the door. My priest, the priest in my parish, said that he was away, on a retreat, and he never heard about it. It was all over the newspapers, it was everywhere. The priests I was very, very disappointed with. In the end all I told them all I wanted was the loan of their church and that was it. The guards? Forget it, they never came near me. But I do think, I mean, the bishop over in Sydney was on the phone to me, right? And that just goes to show you, the bishop in Sydney was on to me. And nobody (here). Quite frankly, I think there should be somebody in the

government to call on people in this situation. The bishop in Sydney was in touch with me, right, and not anybody in this country here in touch with me. Now, I think that that's a poor reflection on the Irish." (FMV2-P4)

Where people did offer support to the bereaved, their support seemed to be appreciated.

"If (my husband) hadn't been there, I would have drank myself to death. With tablets and drink, I would have been dead by now." (FMV2-P3)

"I had fantastic support from friends, fantastic. They never stopped calling, they stayed with me, they brought food in, they organised everything. They were with me, I had friends with me for weeks. They were brilliant...they were fabulous." (FMV2-P4)

However, it was also mentioned that support, which is present in the initial stages, often lessens with time.

"I had a good few people coming and going, but when this was all over..." (FMV2-P1)

"Yeah, they're there one minute and then they're gone." (FMV2-P4)

During one conversation, some participants described what is *not* helpful to hear from other people.

"With friends and family, you do want to see people doing well, and helping, but you do get an awful lot of do-gooders. You'd love to be able to put a sign on your door." (FMV1-P10)

"Yeah, you get a lot of people saying, 'I'd kill him if I was you', cause you're in a state, aren't you?" (FMV1-P4)

"(and they ask you) 'Are you going to do anything when he comes out?' That's why I do sit down with my lads and tell them that I'm not going to go through this a second time. And it was in talking about that that one of them turned around and said that one of his friends said to him, 'What are

you going to do when he comes out?' He wanted us to go and do something." (FMV1-P5)

"And it's the very person who says that that'd stand back." (FMV1-P4)

A mother of a victim did not appreciate someone who was not an intimate acquaintance, discussing the case with her.

"A woman only said to me this evening, in the supermarket, 'Our friend,' she said, 'I heard our friend got another 7 years.' I said, 'Our friend?' 'Your man.' And I'm with my daughter, I thought she was going to be sick." (FMV1-P5)

Participants also worried about other people's reactions.

"Our mother is worried about what people think about (the deceased) because (the offender) was let go home. Do people think he deserved what he got? Have people's image changed of him? We've constantly got to reassure her." (FMV1-P1)

Practical needs

Victim Support

The participants were asked specifically about Victim Support, and how the organisation could best meet their support needs.

Again, many felt that the support should be offered to them on an outreach basis, rather than them having to come looking for it.

"We started off, my mother, my family, with no support other than (Victim Support), but even at that we had to contact Victim Support, they don't voluntarily come to you…We had to go looking for support." (FMV1-P2)

"The Garda told me that I'd have to get some counselling and things like that, you know. So, they told me about Victim Support. So I rang, they said *you* have to ring, you know? So, *I* had to ring Victim Support." (FMV2-P1)

"Nobody contacted me. A friend of mine in work, she saw me starting to crack up…So she, in fact, got on to Victim Support for me." (FMV2-P4)

One participant described the shock of learning the bad news, and the support needed in the aftermath.

"I went to bed the night before (the deceased) was murdered, right? And I was thinking (about things I'd have to do before Christmas), and I'm going to bed thinking about this. And at 5 o'clock in the morning, I get a knock on the door, to tell me what was after happening. So, you're just thrown into this situation. You do need help. I think we should be told where to go, you know. And okay, I know it's hard to go into a situation for people like you, to go into a situation where somebody does not want it. But at the same time people are crying out for help because you just don't know what to do.

It's different…I know it's a shock even if someone gets knocked down on the road, or dies suddenly. But it's totally different when you're murdered.

It doesn't matter what anybody says, because I've been through it. There are quite a lot of deaths, but the murder one is the worst of the lot. Because you can cope with natural death or accidental death, but taking somebody's life like that, you just cannot cope with it. And, you know, you are crying out for help." (FMV1-P8)

Somebody suggested that the Gardai could leave them some information about support.

"I think the detectives of the police should leave you something. You mightn't look at it for a week or two, but it's there." (FMV1-P4)

"When they come into your house to tell you, you should be given a booklet." (FMV1-P8)

"That's how we came across even just information, because when we went through the funeral home, we were given a booklet on when someone dies, and it has all sorts of information. And in it, there's information on how to deal with your children when they come across death, and the things to say to them, the things to encourage them to do. And it was great to help us to cope with our own children. Because your own head is spinning, and you still have to say, 'Are the kids okay?' " (FMV1-P1)

It was felt that it was important to be given information about Victim Support, because many people are unaware that the service exists.

"A lot of people wouldn't be aware of Victim Support, it's not something that you come across every day of your life, or anything. Not to me, anyway. Not till you're in that situation." (FMV1-P9)

One participant felt that Victim Support were the only people she could talk to.

"The guard recommended Victim Support and I came along and I met (the volunteer). And I told her everything that had happened. She was the first person that I could speak to, really, about what had happened." (FMV1-P7)

Most participants were very positive about the support they received from Victim Support.

"The police told me to contact Victim Support so I got (the volunteer) in Victim Support. And she came to me, not to my house, she came to meet me in the Garda Station. We got a room in the Garda Station and she'd come to meet me nearly every week. You know, she was trying to help me... When (the volunteer) kept speaking to me and talking to me and telling me all different things...that I'd have to go on for the two girls and for this little grandchild. My first little grandchild...

And I was screaming crying. Every time (the volunteer) met me, I was crying and crying you know, at the time. I thought I couldn't cope...

She gave me great support. She kept talking to me and talking to me, trying to talk me out of things that I thought I was going to do. I was thinking about all things, you know? I wanted to do things and she kept saying, 'What about your children?...I just want to say, the lady I had, she was fantastic. She really was, honest to God. ' (FMV2-P1)

"(Victim Support) was the only support I got...I was on very heavy medication, and between the doctor and Victim Support and this friend I had, the three of them got me through it." (FMV2-P4)

One participant felt that the families themselves should have more of a say in the support process.

"Sometimes I think Victim Support have it all wrong. No disrespect to any of yous, but yous are kind of out there, looking in, rather than being in here, trying to bring people in. Yous tend to be all standoffish, you know, yous are out there. 'We're Victim Support, come on in and we'll help you.' The

basis should be us people, we're the victims, we're the work, we're the ones who had the experience and you're the people who are learning form us. So, I think a bit of thought needs to be put into it, a bit of restructuring needs to be done on it." (FMV2-P2)

However, another felt that it was important that support came from an "objective" source.

"With Victim Support, with adults, it's good because they stand back, they don't intrude. You don't actually, as a group, intrude on people's privacy. You're there, you're sort of resilient, because I know with my mother you were very resilient. You just made the phonecall and said hello. And eventually, she actually came around after a good number of months. But you know, you're not intrusive, you can actually stand back, and it helps." (FMV1-P10)

There appeared to be many practical needs felt by families following the death. Both the suddenness and the circumstances of the death left survivors in shock, but still having to deal with practicalities.

"(My brother) worked in a small bakery, and there was a lady in the office who looked after the wages. And she just said to me, 'I'll sort it out, just bring me down whatever documentation that you need,' and she got it all sorted out. She had been through it all before in her own family and she was very aware of me not being able to cope and not knowing where to turn and whatever. She sorted all those things out." (FMV1-P1)

One participant was appreciative of the help from Victim Support in filling out compensation forms. In some families, the paperwork can be quite extensive.

"I think Victim Support have been very good in that respect as well, because having got the forms and phone calls, then to help fill them out. As

a family, we were asked, and there's 14 in our family, how to sign or are you going to claim." (FMV1-P10)

Victim Support could have a role to play in helping families sort out the practicalities surrounding the death.

Some people felt that Victim Support could help them to change the perceived inequalities of the justice system.

"A lot needs to be changed by the sounds of things." (FMV1-P6)

"And I think it's Victim Support who can start changing." (FMV1-P4)

"It's the likes of us who can start the changing. Victim Support are very good and they're here for backup, but I mean, people need to know that things do need to be changed. It's probably going to be too late for most of us in the room, but we can help." (FMV1-P8)

The feeling of wanting to change the system to help others in the future could also be seen as a coping mechanism, and is discussed again as "coping mechanisms" later in the chapter.

Participants also discussed the support that Victim Support provided at the trial, a full description of which is given under "Court Trial".

Support Group

At the time of the focus groups, Victim Support ran a monthly support group in Dublin, which some of the participants had attended. It was felt important to be able to speak to other people who had been similarly bereaved.

"I think that what should be on offer is for the person, this is just for myself, but that the person or the family that have had somebody murdered, the offer of somebody that has already gone down the road with somebody murdered, should be there. There should be someone to say, 'Would you like to speak to someone, maybe now or at a later stage, who has had someone murdered?' " (FMV2-P3)

One lady thought back to the time of the murder and thought that talking to someone who had been similarly bereaved was a more appropriate form of support, because she wouldn't have felt well enough to receive visitors from Victim Support.

"That was all I wanted. Because I don't think you're fit...cause everyone's different. I don't think that if anybody called on me I'd be in any fit state to speak to anybody." (FMV2-P3)

There ensued a discussion about the setting up of an earlier support group, several years previously.

"I very badly wanted to speak to somebody else who had had somebody murdered and I found that very hard to do. And I ended up in counselling with J.D. and he in turn put me in touch with C.B., whose daughter was murdered...I was desperate to speak to someone else, (but) I found it very hard to find someone else. Very, very hard. And then J. put me in touch with C. and I spoke to C. and that was a bit of a help. But I felt very let down by Victim Support afterwards because they just closed down the group, you know, and I think that's dreadful." (FMV2-P3)

"...There isn't any support for people afterwards in the sense that they can all sit around and...empathise with each other. And I feel from experience, and from the experience of (my wife), that this is needed. She needed to speak to someone who had gone through all the feelings and all the experience that she'd had. Which would have helped her along the way because no matter how long you go to a psychiatrist or a psychologist, you tell them everything, he's only there to...A lot of them won't fight back with you. Do you understand me? They're very receptive and they'll sit there and they'll take on board what you're saying, and they'll give their three words of advice at the end, which is normally cryptic and you've got to work it our for yourself! But we needed someone across the table, that's

my own feeling, that will argue with you, and get the emotions going, get it worked out within a room. That you can go off somewhere afterwards and have a cry and a hug. You come away from a place like that feeling much better.

What was trying to be done at that time was to start one of those groups in Victim Support. And what was happening was, you were getting the same people. And it started up about six people and it dropped down to four and we had the same people and you were getting the same story. And in my opinion, it wasn't being stirred enough." (FMV2-P2)

"One lady might take over for the night, I found, in the group." (FMV2-P3)

"The dominant personality would take over the group." (FMV2-P2)

"And then there was nobody there to say, 'Well, okay, can we move on?' " (FMV-P3)

"It has to be structured to a degree. Because you can't bring a lot of raw people into this group. You bring people in who are 'down the road' a bit, and this is the hard bit I suppose, although you're down the road a bit, you mightn't be better. You need someone down the road a bit who's better...To help the person who's coming along. It just becomes stagnant if you have the same people at the same level because they won't go anywhere. So, I always felt that that's what was needed." (FMV2-P2)

"I suppose you'd have suggestions about how you have come on, you know, could help them possibly. You know, by saying, 'Right, this is how I dealt with it.' I mean, we've all probably dealt with it in different ways. So, I mean, your suggestion might help so-and-so, and so forth." (FMV2-P4)

It was also felt that the group should be continuously open to new members and that nobody should be discouraged from joining the meeting at any stage.

"If that happened to me, I would be mentally disturbed if I was refused. It would mentally affect me. That's my opinion." (FMV2-P4)

The Criminal Justice System

Many participants voiced dissatisfaction with their experience of the criminal justice system.

"You can scratch out the 'justice'!" (FMV1-P2)

"We feel like we didn't get any justice." (FMV1-P1)

"We've just been living in hell. We're really very angry with the whole system" (FMV1-P8)

"I don't think there's justice around here, quite frankly." (FMV2-P4)

The specific dissatisfactions voiced were mostly in relation to confusion over how the system actually works. One participant expressed dissatisfaction over the length of time it took for the accused to be charged with his sister's murder.

"It took nine years. I lost all faith in (the Gardai). Although they suspected (the offender), they suspected him from day one, but they just couldn't get him. Any time they went to speak to him, he'd be "Oh, I'll just get my solicitor," and leave the country." (FMV1-P3)

Some participants felt that the criminal justice system is weighted in favour of the offender, rather than the victim.

"We didn't do anything wrong, but all our children and the sisters and brothers in my husband's family, we're all still suffering. While his family got all the help. So, I mean, it's really time that something was done for the victims. (FMV1-P5)

"You do really seem to be saying that the system is weighted in terms of the person who has committed the crime, and against the victims." (Facilitator)

"Oh, of course it is." (FMV1-P1)

"It seems to be totally imbalanced." (FMV1-P6)

"Well, what I felt was, this (offender) was on drugs in a big way, right? She was in prison, okay?...But I couldn't believe when I actually saw her in the courts. Because, on the newspaper, she had this long hair. She was straggly-looking, her hands were in cuffs and there was a policeman dragging her away. But when I...was sitting in the courts...I looked over. This girl had her hair cut to about there (indicating shoulder-length), she'd highlights in her hair, and beautifully dressed. So, you tell me. Where's the justice there, in a way? Since when are there hairdressing salons in prison? Okay, somebody can bring her in clothes, but this girl was completely different to what she was in the newspaper. And this is something I couldn't understand." (FMV2-P4)

Another participant whose son was murdered, found it difficult to watch how the accused was represented.

"This lad (the offender) was well known to the police and he was on drugs, and he was known to three different Garda Stations around. And he was up there (in the courtroom) in a suit...and I said to my sister, 'He's a good looking lad. Look at him now that he's cleaned up in a suit and a shirt and tie.' And we literally saw his mam pulling him out of the car, stripping him off and putting a shirt and tie on him going in to the courts, when we were arriving to go in. And I said, 'We weren't even allowed to do what you're doing.' " (FMV1-P5)

Two participants in Group 2 explained how medical assistance had worked out expensive for them, in the aftermath of the murder.

"We were meeting with the Eastern Health Board...trying to suss things out. We made the point that this person that killed (my wife's) mother was getting the best medical help the State can provide for them. Plus the swimming pool they have up there, the gym, the times she's let out to the pub, the times she's brought to the RDS. What's the other journey she's made?" (FMV2-P2)

"She's also sued the Eastern Health Board for a six-figure sum because she says...somebody approached her for sexual favours, so she's taking the Eastern Health Board to court herself. So, that's going through at the moment. (To FMV2-P4): You mentioned streaks? She was obviously allowed out at Christmas to have streaks in her hair." (FMV2-P3)

"We're down to the basic thing, anyway, that the person who committed the crime is getting far better looked after than the victim." (FMV2-P2)

"I do think it's my right to get better than what I got. I do think it's my right to get more compensation than what we got. I do think it's my right that our family should be better looked after than the family of the person who committed the crime.

I mean, harping back on the same thing, she (the offender) has the services of a psychiatrist, she has the services of a psychologist, she has the services of anybody she wants. She's got medical services as well. I mean, every pill that we've bought has to be paid for. Every visit to the doctor has to be paid for. Every visit to a counsellor had to be paid for." (FMV2-P2)

"The system is all wrong" (FMV2-P4)

A mother of a young male victim felt that the sentences that are given to offenders are insufficient, and do not act as a deterrent to other potential offenders.

"Well, I think the lack of justice in the whole system means that it's sending out a signal... What it's actually saying is it's actually all right to go out and take someone's life because in a couple of years' time, even though (the offender) was just a year or two years younger than (the deceased), he's going to come out the same age as my youngest fella, about 29 or 30. He'll have his whole life in front of him. So, what they're saying is, "You can murder who you like, go a way for a little while, we'll do everything for you while you're in there, you'll be nice and comfortable, we'll give you all the education and all the things you want, even drugs if you want them,

because he seems to be getting them in there, and do everything you want and you'll be back out and then take up with your life." " (FMV1-P5)

"You might even find a loophole and you won't even have to do that, just carry on your life anyway." (FMV1-P2) The offender in this case had been let off his trial on a technicality.

Two participants in FMV group 1 discussed how they felt that the more murders that are committed, the less justice there appears to be.

"Even there are so many that have got away with it, and there's nothing for the victims. It's just a matter of when is the next one. It's like as if we've become familiar with it now, we've got used to it now, but become (complacent). Just take it or leave it." (FMV1-P5)

"But murder is so common now. It's on the news, they're not getting the sentence, nobody is... Like the guy who walked out of the court for (my brother's murder). It didn't change anything for us. And for (the offender), it may as well never have happened because there is nothing to say it did. He has no record, he has nothing. He walked out of there. We still have lost our brother. My mother has still lost her son." (FMV1-P1)

Another participant described what she had learnt from sitting through the court trial.

"When we went to see (the judge)... she said to us... "What experience do you think you got out of the trial?" It was such a long trial and all, and the two of us at the exact same time said to her, "How to murder someone and get away with it." And she was stunned. And here was I, "We know all the loopholes. If we were able to learn all of that, we'd know what to do at the police station and what not to do, when to eat and when not to eat, you know, because he got off on a technicality over these stupid little things, so we learnt them all. Sure, any criminal could come in off the street and sit down and be educated like we were, and know all the things." " (FMV1-P4)

Indeed, a lot of frustration was expressed by participants who had seen the accused in their case go free on a technicality.

Offenders who were given early release were also a bone of contention.

"He's out dancing in the same nightclubs and drinking in the same places." (FMV1-P5)

"(The offender got) eight years put inside. I thought that meant eight years, but I've just heard that he could be out in April." (FMV1-P5)

"Another thing you aren't told about is (the offender)'s going to appeal this. They let you walk away thinking that it's all over, and then maybe a year down the line the appeal is here....You're not even told about it. Unless you have good detectives that come along and keep in touch with you. Can you imagine what it's like for someone to go down and then to get their appeal, and three judges to come and sit up there and turn around then and say that...he has to go free on a technicality. You just feel like throwing yourself out through the window. The girls that were there...they needed help. They were screaming outside at the fact that he was going to be out free and roaming around. One of those girls is in an institution now." (FMV1-P4)

"But, (the offender) got 5 years suspended sentence. He was found guilty of manslaughter and got 5 years suspended sentence because he was a 'good boy'. He signed up at the police station for three and a half years, every day while he was out. And he didn't do anything wrong (during that time). They found him guilty of manslaughter, and that was it....But I said, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, he did murder my husband." " (FMV2-P1)

Several expressed frustration at the length of time it currently takes for cases to come to trial.

"I also think that murder trials should be given priority...At the moment there's a waiting list for trials in the Four Courts." (FMV1-P6)
"We haven't got enough judges now." (FMV1-P10)
"When (my husband) was murdered, it was the 14th of November. He'll be nearly two years dead." (FMV1-P9)
"And the guy's still roaming around. Like, that's horrendous." (FMV1-P6)

"It's such a serious offence, they shouldn't be allowed two years roaming the streets. No way." (FMV1-P8)
"Well, we're nearly two years now." (FMV1-P10)

"In our case, it's only last week I remembered, and started thinking about things. Like your man who murdered (my husband), he went home and got in to bed beside his own child. And the police came along and took him out. And he done it, and that's the end of it. But he wasn't charged with murder until (a good while afterwards)." (FMV1-P9)
"It was months and months later. And every time he went to court (we'd think) "Oh yeah, he'll be charged this time." And we'd come away, we wouldn't know what's going on, all the lawyers coming in and all the carry-on." (FMV1-P8)

The granting of bail to the accused came up unprompted in FMV Group 1.
"Well, my brother's murderer, she walked free from the police station after she told them she'd killed him. She told the police she'd killed him and they let her off. And there's a ten thousand pounds bail supplied by the mother. She has left the country on numerous occasions, she goes to England, presumably, cause she doesn't need a passport. But I mean, once you go to England, you can go on to anywhere. You can go down to Jersey, you can go anywhere. Then you can go to France. I mean, she's done that. And she's also back living in the community, like you're saying." (FMV1-P10)

It seemed like there was a distinct lack of information being provided to families of murder victims about the criminal justice system, how it works and why, and what to expect. The general consensus seemed to be that awareness of how the Criminal Justice System works is low amongst the general population. One participant felt it would be helpful if the media could play a more active role in explaining the system in layman's terms.

"Nobody realises, nobody knows what goes on until it hits your own doorstep. Now, you're talking about the media? I mean...they could come in very handy, because people are not aware of what goes on. And they should know what goes on in the court system."

Participants were asked for their views on restorative justice. It appeared to depend on the circumstances of the death as to what people's views would be.

"That's a silly question!" (FMV2-P2)

A sister of a murder victim felt that the offender may not have meant to kill her brother, and therefore perhaps prison was not the best place for him.

"It was before the first trial, I thought...I didn't want to see this guy going to prison, you know, because he assaulted (my brother) and from the damage that he'd done when he fell, which damaged his brain, and then caused his death. And I just thought, well, maybe it was an accident. It doesn't change what happened, but maybe he didn't really mean to do it. And I thought, well, rather than put you in prison where you can learn a few more tricks, you know, how to better yourself in the criminal justice system. If he was put into a place where he would have to look after, help with people that would have lived in (my brother's) state had he lived. Paralysed people...To show him what he did." (FMV1-P1)

Another participant, however, felt it inappropriate that a murderer would be involved in a caring profession.

"Can you imagine, now, (my relative's) child, he's mentally retarded, right? And he's in one of those places and imagine if the likes of a murderer was going in there looking after them?" (FMV1-8)

Participants did not really have much to say on restorative justice. However in general, where offenders were concerned, participants' attitudes were punitive.

"I'd like to see them tagged for the rest of their lives, like a sex offender." (FMV1-P6)

"I'd actually like to see their necks broke and put in a wheelchair, not being able to get out, stuck in one bloody home together with nothing to do but talk to each other. 'Who did you murder? Who did you murder? Who did you murder?' " (FMV1-P9)

"I'll kill her if I see her. She's dead...And I don't care if I get locked up." (FMV2-P1)

Although an inherent part of the criminal justice system, issues surrounding the court trial were so numerous that they make up a separate subsection as follows.

The Court Trial

Of the total of 14 participants in both groups, 11 participants were at the stage where the case had come to trial and an outcome had been reached. All 11 chose to attend the trial.

Dissatisfaction abounded amongst virtually all participants with regard to the court trial.

"We didn't feel we were treated very well in the court trial itself." (FMV1-P5)

"My experience was dreadful." (FMV2-P1)

There was a specific issue over the perceived defamation of the deceased's character in court. Most participants felt that the character of the deceased had been misrepresented, which was both hurtful and frustrating to family members.

"We didn't get a chance to say anything about (the deceased), or his character. Everything was all to do with *him* (the accused)...they said a lot of things that weren't true." (FMV1-P5)

"It was the way (the defence counsel) kept referring to my mother all the time. The 'old lady'. And there was a total lack of respect they felt for her. You know, the way he handled it, like. I mean, he was there to see that (the accused) got guilty but insane, and he was going to get it anyway. He was going to get that anyway. And it was just...lack of respect for our family he had." (FMV2-P3)

One sister of a victim was concerned about the portrayal of her deceased brother's character in court. Her brother was involved in a relationship that had been violent on both sides. She was concerned that only the bad things about her brother would be told in court, rather than the other, nicer side to his character.

"...the dilemma is how you can put across your (side of the story). It was my brother who was killed. How can you tell people what he was like? And people are going to judge him on...his life as a husband or whatever, never on his life as a brother...And the day that things happened is going to be judged on those 24 hours rather than on the 38 years he had of his life.

It's, you know, going to be really difficult – it's coming very close now and I'm getting really scared, you know, about the whole thing. I've tried to explain to my family that we don't get a chance to actually say anything. That you do get a chance to speak after, from what I understand, after the jury has made the decision and before the judge passes sentence. And, I mean, at least you get a chance to say what the person was like." (FMV1-P10)

A mother of a murder victim felt that not only was it unfair that they could not speak of the deceased's character in court, but that the court was actually biased towards the defence. The conversation came up whilst the facilitator was nodding her head to another participant.
"Can I say now that you're nodding your head, the judge said any more facial expressions and I'll clear the court. We were literally not allowed show (my son's) character whatsoever...The judge said any more nodding of the head, or facial expressions, and I'll clear the court." (FMV1-P5)

One sister of a victim poignantly described how she felt it was unfair that the deceased was not represented. She made the point that if he was not dead, but rather brain damaged, that he would be allowed to be wheeled into the courtroom. However, she said, because her brother was dead, the jury were told not to consider him.
"(The court) didn't want to know anything about (my brother), and (the jury) were told not to think of us, of our pain. They weren't to think about us when they were deciding. Yet, when (the accused's) barrister was summing up, he said 'Now, you think. If this was your child in the box, if it was your son, or your cousin, or your brother.' And they weren't to think about us, or my brother. He was a faceless person. And I said to the detective, we were having lunch with him. I said to him, my brother was on life support, and he was brain dead. And his machine was turned off. (But) he could have recovered sufficiently to come home. And I said to him, 'If

we had him here in a wheelchair, and we brought him into the court, do you think we would be influencing the jury?' And he said to me, 'Well, if he was alive, he'd have to come in and give evidence.' So I said, 'Say if he couldn't speak, then he couldn't give evidence, and I brought him in. What then? Am I influencing the jury?' 'No,' he says. So because he's dead, he's nobody. If he was a cripple in a wheelchair, he could have sat there." (FMV1-P2)

It was hard for a mother of a murder victim to understand that the accused's activities, outside of the evidence relating to that specific case, were not brought before the court.

"The judge didn't get enough evidence...The police had made every effort to say that actually, when (the accused) was out on bail, he stabbed somebody at Christmas, before the trial was in May. And he was already in so much trouble. And none of this would have been brought to the court, we couldn't talk about any of that." (FMV1-P5)

Some participants felt it was unfair that they could not have their own representation in court. This led to a feeling of being left "outside" of the proceedings.

"We don't have a choice in who represents us. I had to ask who was speaking to us, I hadn't a clue what was going on. In fairness, I could have been introduced to him, but I don't remember. He was the prosecutor...but we didn't talk to him...We had nothing to say about it whatsoever." (FMV1-P5)

"Basically, there's very little interaction between the family and state. There's nothing." (FMV1-P6)

"I think that's what we're all asking for, that the State prosecution have an organised meeting
with the family before the trial." (FMV1-P6)

"Yeah, just to sit down and tell you what he is going to do, what's going on." (FMV1-P10)

"What's expected and what's going to happen." (FMV1-P6)

One sister-in-law felt it was unfair that the defence has a larger budget at its disposal than the prosecution.

"I remember I found out that the person who commits the murder, they get...more money to defend them. (The judge) said, 'Well, you see that's because...it's their life.' " (FMV1-P4)

It was also deemed unfair that the accused gets legal representation right away, but that the deceased's family do not know who the prosecuting counsel will be until much nearer the trial.

"I feel, you know, and it's the same with most trials, (the offenders) are appointed a solicitor right away. The minute they're charged. You know what I mean, like the families have got nothing." (FMV1-P8)

"Even when they're giving a statement. And they can change their solicitor." (FMV1-P4)

"And they can do this and they can do that. And the families haven't got the money to back them up the way the State can back up the murderers. I think that the prosecution...the families should be allowed to meet them, but not (just) in the morning (of the trial)." (FMV1-P8)

One lady, however, had had a positive experience with the judiciary.

"I went to see the judge, cause I said to him, 'Do you ever think about the families when you're up there?' And he said, 'Yes, I do.' And the judge said to me it's up to more families and more people to get it into their head to come and see the likes of us and tell us, you know, what you feel during the trial.' But I never thought it was possible to go and speak to a judge. And he said, 'Oh, it is.' But people just don't." (FMV1-P4)

The lack of financial support given to families to attend court trials was another bone of contention amongst participants. The accused, who *must* attend the court trial, is provided with expenses by the State. The deceased's family members, however, who may not be called as witnesses, do not have financial aid provided.

"(At the trial) we met another girl and her sister was after being killed...Two of her sisters had to go home in the middle of the trial. One had to go back to England and the other had to go to America, they couldn't stay. I think that's a total disgrace...I mean, there should be some money set aside. I mean, those trials don't go on that long. But if there was things (the offender needed), everything would be done, no problem. He'd be brought in and out, and given whatever he wanted. They're the things that need to be changed." (FMV1-P4)

In the Irish Criminal Justice system, the Victim Impact Statement is a statement made by the victim to the judge on how the crime has impacted on his/her life. The statement is presented in the case of an accused either pleading guilty or being found guilty. In the case of murder trials, however, the victim has deceased. It is presently the case that it is up to the discretion of the judiciary as to whether a Victim Impact Statement will be prepared on behalf of the immediate family.

One participant felt that she should have been made aware of the existence of the Victim Impact Statement, because it was indeed called for in the case of her murdered son's trial.

"And at the last minute, then, the Victim Impact Statement was offered to us, which was grand, but I said I should have seen this before now." (FMV1-P5)

Most participants felt the need for support around the time of the court trial. In relation to the support provided by Victim Support, it was felt that it was

helpful to meet the support volunteer before the trial, rather than simply meeting up on the day.

"...my other sister-in-law, she got in touch with the girl in Victim Support....So, I went in and then we didn't hear for a while from them and then we got a date for the trial...And then he (the volunteer) arrives on the day of the trial. And some of (my husband's) sisters don't want anything to do with him. Which was stupid of someone to just come at that time. We felt it was just a total waste of time, because he was just a stranger. I had met him a few times, but to the rest of them it was too late then. Definitely too late. I think he came for about 3 or 4 days and just disappeared then." (FMV1-P4)

Another participant spoke of how the support from Victim Support had been helpful to her.

"Victim Support came (to the trial), a different person each day, sometimes three or four of them, and other than that, I wouldn't have been able to go to it, to go to the Four Courts. I wouldn't have known the places to go, or where to go for a cup of tea, or the toilets. There was someone with us all the time, every single day we were there....

They were with me every day, because I remember the first time, walking into the Four Courts, I – I just got dizzy, they were huge. And there was one of them (volunteers) either side of me, and all my sisters and brothers were there, and they (the volunteers) were there every day. The trial lasted two, maybe three weeks." (FMV1-P5)

"Well, we're going through all that now, and we've spoken to the people who will actually meet you in the court. It takes away that worry, that there is actually going to be help from people and tell you, 'It's okay to sit there,' and 'If you want to go to the loo...' You know, all those little things. They seem little, but they're huge in your mind when you go into a place. I mean, that in itself is just phenomenal." (FMV1-P10)

"I think there was two people with us, there was a gentleman and there was a lady. And they were very good for the simple reason, being totally ignorant of the courts, they explained to us as things were going on, *what* was going on, what was happening, what's going to happen next. Which was very helpful." (FMV2-P2)

During the trial, on one occasion the Victim Support Volunteer needed to intervene, to calm a family member down.

"So, we were going down for a cup of tea, we were walking down, you know the way you come out of the court and walk down to the restaurant? (The accused) comes sauntering out, with her crowd, and pushes through. She nearly knocked me flying. And my young one turned around, my youngest one…she was nearly going to knock her out, my young one. And (the volunteer) grabbed her and said, 'Don't – it'll go against your mammy.' So we walked out of the court and we went somewhere else." (FMV2-P1)

"You really need to be getting ready for (the trial) about three months beforehand. At least then you'll feel you can take more in." (FMV1-P4)

"I met (the volunteer) a few times, I went over there across the quays with her for a cup of tea. Because one day…before the trial came up, she brought me in to look at one of the courts, and see what was going to happen and where I'd be. All this business. She was telling me all these things." (FMV2-P1)

One participant also spoke of how Victim Support had been helpful in giving her legal information.

"The year before that, he (the accused) was out on bail, and (Victim Support) told us how to go and get an injunction to get him kept off the

(street where we live). Things like that...I mean, I had to go to (my local TDs), I had to do everything myself. Except as I said, for Victim Support." (FMV1-P5)

Some participants felt rather unprepared for the court trial.

"I haven't a clue what's going on. I haven't a clue." (FMV1-P9)

Some felt that it would be helpful to have some preparation in advance.

"I don't know what it must be like now, but when I used to go to the (Victim Support Support Group meetings), for the murder victims, and people would be sitting there and saying, 'I feel like as soon as this trial comes, that that's the end of it.' And my heart used to go out to them. Because I think that that's a major thing. And I think that the best thing is if Victim Support prepared you for that, in the coming weeks, coming up to (the trial), to tell you about everything. You know, like 'This is the day that (the accused) is going to get up' ...and 'This is what it's going to be like'. So that you have the choice as to whether you're going to sit there and think you're going to be able for it. I mean, we saw the pictures of (the deceased) without even realising." (FMV-P4)

In fact, another participant agreed that it was helpful to be told when the graphic evidence was going to be produced, so they could leave the courtroom.

"And I had to be taken out several times because the guard said 'I'd prefer it', he said, 'Because they're going to go into detail, show a lot of photographs.' " (FMV1-P5)

The graphic evidence is particularly difficult for families of murder victims to hear.

"All the evidence wasn't brought out, which would have been rather gruesome. Well, it would have been very gruesome...We were saved

that...If they think she was guilty but insane, it was the right way. I think that was the right way to do it." (FMV2-P2)

One wife of a murder victim did not understand that everything that she shared with the Gardai could come out in court. She remembered telling the investigating Garda how she was feeling at the time of the murder.
"I said, 'I just feel like lying down and dying. I just want to go to heaven, and that's it. I just want to die, I just want to be with (my husband). There's no future for me here.' (But) I just got it into my head, to just live from day to day. But that's what I told (the Garda)...and he told the judge that I wanted to die, to commit suicide. That came out. I don't know, that was in confidence, that was confidential, right? And this was what came out in the courts. That I wanted to die...He broke faith with me. That turned me completely against the guards. I didn't want anything to do with them." (FMV2-P1)

Again, with regard to feeling unprepared for the court trial, participants felt that more could be done to prepare them for their part as witnesses. They felt that it should be explained clearly to witnesses that it is their right to be given a copy of their statement in advance of the court trial. One sister of a victim remembered one key witness was not given her statement in time.
"She was given it for about 10 minutes. We were in court twice, there was a hung jury first time. So we had to go back, that was in November and then it came up again. She was given the statement just before she actually went in the door. Now, I identified (my brother's body), my statement was like, one page, and I was sitting there going, 'Oh, I hope I have the right time', and whatever. She had, like 30 pages, and she was given it just before she went in, to flick through it. And she was the first called." (FMV1-P1)
"And then the barrister challenged her on little things. And she felt guilty when she came back down." (FMV1-P10)

It was difficult for families of murder victims to be in close proximity with the accused during the court trial.

"And we were on the way out (when) I could see my brother at the back, saying 'There she is!' She was handcuffed to one of the guards. And her shoulder and my shoulder just hit off one another. And, I mean, this is the one that destroyed my family. And her shoulder was up against my shoulder, and she butchered my mother...I had to go to bed (afterwards). I had to go home and go to bed *again*. But that should never have been allowed to happen, that she was beside me.

She was allowed to be sitting out in the corridor while we were going out, and we were here ad she was where you're sitting (indicates a distance of a few feet)." (FMV2-P3)

One sister of a murder victim described how she felt when the accused was found not guilty.

The accused had supporters in the court, who began making noises.

"Like, they cheered...they were starting to cheer in the court. And somebody obviously said to them, 'Shut up.' And we just sat there. There was (my brother's) girlfriend and his friend and the four of us just sat there, we just couldn't move. We were stuck. We couldn't move, we couldn't believe it. And to hear this cheering in the background, it was incredible. And we just sat and we said absolutely nothing. And we just got up then when we were ready and we left." (FMV1-P1)

The court trial process is often very long and tiring for families. One participant described how she felt towards the end.

"Once (the Gardai) came over to me and said something...about manslaughter, or murder, or something, you know? I said, 'Look, just leave me alone,' I said to them, 'I don't want to know anything, just leave me alone, right? I don't care if he gets murder, or manslaughter, or what. I

don't care any more. Right?' I was getting browned off, you know, I was getting fed up with the whole lot." (FMV2-P1)

Despite how difficult the court trial process was, most family members agreed that attending the trial was something that they felt they had to do.

"You feel as if you're in control as well as they are. You have to be in control. It's the same way as you have to be allowed to decide what you want to hear, what you want to see. You know yourself, and for a lot of it, you're just satisfied with something inside. It was like sitting in on (the Pathologist's report), or whatever, I had to do that. I had to do that for myself and I needed to hear that." (FMV1-P2)

"We went to every single sitting, there was about 7, but we went to every single one." (FMV1-P10)

"There were three things that I wanted to do when I went to (the trial). I wanted to be there for her sentencing. I wanted to see her and to look her straight in the eyes. These were very important to me. And I wanted to go where it happened. So, I did the three things. But the catching her in the eyes was difficult because I was up above. There were only two days we were in the courts, but I was up above and she was down below...

And it was the end of it, anyway, she had been sentenced and so forth. And she was standing up and I just looked down and I said 'Hey!'. Just like that. And she looked around like that, not realizing that I was above. So, I said 'Hey!' again, and she looked again. And that was it, I just needed to look her straight in the eyes, because I was going to be the last one she saw before leaving the courtroom. And I was hoping that that would play on her mind again, you know? And that's it." (FMV2-P4)

The Gardai

Participants were invited to comment on their experiences with the Gardai. They were asked about their positive and their negative experiences, and if they thought that there was anything they would have liked to receive, yet didn't get.

Most participants had positive things to say.

"In fairness to the guards, where we were concerned, they actually were very forthcoming with their support. There was a female guard, detective, who sat with my mother and asked to sit with her on her own, you know, for the family to leave them, and she sat and spoke to my mother and she explained all about Victim Support. Now, maybe she was a supporter or maybe a feeling-person, but she actually explained everything to my mother about the group, and what Victim Support does, and maybe we should try them. And then she talked to me, and she told me about Victim Support for children of bereaved, and she gave me telephone numbers, and I actually programmed them into my mobile phone. And they were extremely good, initially, you know, they were." (FMV1-P10)

A sister of a murder victim remembered the support they got in the beginning.

"They came to the house, and from the beginning they sort of, I was there all the time and they came out to me, so I became their voice. He would come and explain everything to me, and I would go to the rest of (the family) and explain what he just said. Because trying to get everyone together at the one time was really difficult. But they were very good, they were very helpful, they kept us informed constantly about what was going on, you know, mobile numbers and everything was given to us. I had every way of contacting them." (FMV1-P1)

It appeared to be helpful to families if they had a specific member of the Gardai to contact when the need arose.

"There was maybe one or two of them that if I wanted to know something, I'd phone them up...there was two of them and I kept in touch with them when I wanted to know. It was the same two all the time." (FMV2-P3)

Another was pleased with the way the Gardai protected them from the media during the trial.

"We were hounded by the media...One of the good things was, in the police's defence, they ushered us out the door and kept the media away from us at the end of the trial." (FMV2-P2)

It seemed that for some participants, if the Gardai did not explain their mode of questioning clearly, they became dissatisfied.

"That morning, then, three students, the CID people, knocked on the door and...I went down to the police station and the first thing they were asking was what David's character was like, and I thought I was actually abused. They were being really nice to me just to get the information they needed. Then after a week or whatever, they didn't even call me when there was a court case on. I found out from other people, these lads from the area. I lived across from them, six people, and then I started getting victimised by them as well. So, I had to move away from my area." (FMV1-P7)

One lady, whose son was murdered outside the country, appeared surprised that the Gardai did not involve themselves with her.

"The guards never came near me..." (FMV2-P4)

Another was not aware that everything she told the Gardai could be repeated in court. This led to disappointment with the Gardai, because she felt that confidentiality had been broken.

"I was after saying to M.M...I said, 'I just feel like lying down and dying, I just want to go to heaven and that's it. I just want to die, I just want to be with (my husband). There's no future for me here.'...that's what I told him, and he told the judge that I wanted to die, to commit suicide. That came out. I don't know, that was in confidence, that was confidential, right? And this was what came out in the courts. That I wanted to die. I didn't want it...He broke faith with me. That turned me completely against the guards. I didn't want anything to do with them. I washed them out of my hands, I really did." (FMV2-P1)

Several participants felt that they were short on information about what was happening, and seemed to feel that it was the job of the Gardai to provide them with this information.

"I think the thing we needed was information. You never knew when it was going to court, you had to ring when it was going to court. I mean, we should be told when it was going to court." (FMV2-P2)

Indeed, many participants felt short on information at various stages of the investigation and prosecution process. A separate section has been devoted to information needs below.

A sister-in-law of a victim felt that the support they got from the Gardai was not great in the beginning, but was much better during the trial.

"Well, years ago now, I have to say, when it all happened, no the police weren't all that (supportive)...It was all rushing around. You see, there was three murders that happened that particular weekend.

Nine years later, when it came to trial, that's when we seen the difference then, with the detectives, I have to say, they were really good...You know how you'd hear things during the trial that you wouldn't understand, and then you'd be going by other people's reactions? We'd be able to say, 'What does that mean?' and they could explain it." (FMV1-P4)

"They explained everything to us, what was going to go on. Participant 4 mentioned photographs earlier on. We were told to keep away from them because the jury were picking up all these pages and seeing the photographs. So in that sense, they were good." (FMV1-P3)

However, people felt they would have liked the Gardai to keep in touch with them for a bit after the trial. A sister of a murder victim found this particularly difficult, following a not-guilty verdict.

"Can I just say that we've finished the court case and my mother is very upset that the police, the detectives, have not come back to her to say anything to her at all. Nothing. She's had no contact now that the trial is over and there's nothing. She feels that somebody should have come. Because they were around for the few weeks beforehand...and now, when it's come to the end, it's all gone. Even just to come back and say, 'We did our best,' and all of that. But there was nothing.

My mother, you see my mother didn't go to the court. We were there, we went through the whole thing, but she was sitting at home, wondering what the hell was going on. And you can only tell her so much and ring her so many times, you know. But nobody came and said, 'Look, we're sorry, it happened the way it happened, you know, we did our best.' Nobody came to finish it off." (FMV1-P1)

It seemed to be important to participants that the Gardai kept in touch with them throughout the process, and kept them informed about proceedings regularly. In cases where this did not happen, it appeared to be a bone of contention.

"The one that's looking after (my sister's) case, she doesn't exist." (FMV1-P8)

"You'd have to sit and listen to the radio, sit by the radio, waiting to hear." (FMV1-P7)

"They don't seem to tell us what's going on...So we're not kept informed. (My sister) is not kept informed." (FMV1-P8)

The facilitator summed up the participants' point as follows:

"So when you're kept informed, you actually feel happier about your contact with the Gardaí than anybody who's not kept informed of what's going on. Is that fair?" (Facilitator)

"Yes." (All – FMV1)

Families' initial contact from the Gardai was usually when the news about the murder was broken to them. The breaking of the news was a major issue for most participants.

"Our first contact with the guards was quite painful for (my mother) because my mum got a phone call from a neighbour to say there was an ambulance outside my brother's house. She lived quite close. My mother's almost 70 now. It's about, maybe, a mile and a half if you take the short cut, and she ran with my niece, my niece would have been 13. And when she got the phone call, she got there and there was a guard standing outside at his gate. And she went to kind of go in there saying, 'It's my son's house.' And he said, 'Well, there's been a fatal stabbing.' My mum said, 'Well, when you say fatal, do you mean my son's dead?' And he said, 'Well, who are you?' And my mother just collapsed. And my niece was 13, she just...my brother lived around the corner and she went running for him and he came, and he's my much older brother, and the guard wasn't very nice to him. He said, 'Look, you're not allowed go in.' My brother said, 'It's my brother's house, I'll go where I want to.' And I'll always remember (the guard) saying you can't go into the crime scene.

Now, the guard himself was very young, my brother was probably older than him, but he was left standing in the evening time outside the gate to guard the crime scene. So, he was very young, and it was unfair to be

abusive towards him, but when you are so caught up in your own emotion, you don't actually feel what he's feeling. And if the people in the place put an inexperienced person, that's not your fault." (FMV1-P10)

Other participants remembered how hearing the bad news was difficult for them.

"They just didn't have a clue. Well, they know what they were doing, but it was like as if they were telling me, you know, you can't go down to the pub because it's closed. They were like, they asked me where is my husband. I said, 'Blanchardstown.' And he says, 'There's after being an accident.' And I says, 'How bad?' And he just said, 'He's dead.' Jesus. And I started going funny. And (my daughter) was coming down the stairs and I said, 'Don't tell her, not in the middle of the night, what's after happening.' And (my son) was staying in the house across the road, and I said, 'Don't tell him.' And they told him standing on the street, 'Your father's dead.' It was absolutely crazy. They didn't know what they were doing. There should have been someone who was educated in that, come to the house, to know what to expect, what the person's reaction to be, crying, screaming, shouting. Because after a while they said, 'Will we get a doctor, or something?' " (FMV1-P9)

The facilities, or lack of, for viewing the body of the deceased, came up unprompted in the first focus group. The conversation turned towards viewing the body during the discussion about the Gardai, and it appeared that several participants felt that the Gardai were instrumental in the experience they had in viewing the body.

It was important to all participants that they were offered a chance to see the body of the deceased. It was appreciated when this was done.

"We went to the hospital, and they let us see our brother, but they'd only let us see his face. We were told he was stabbed. And we wanted to see him. I couldn't believe he was dead, cause I'd seen him comatose before, so I was going, 'Come on, you're going to wake up.' You know, it was only when I touched him in the hospital...But the guards were at the hospital from R-, and they knew us as a large family, and they were great." (FMV1-P10)

A mother of a murder victim remembered that it was difficult for her to see her son's body immediately after he had been killed. She arrived at the murder scene to find that her son, who at that stage was in a critical condition, had been taken to hospital.

"I had to keep shouting at the guards, 'Where's (my son) gone? Where's my son?' And eventually he said, 'You can't come in. I said, 'Where is he? Has he gone to the hospital?' And he said, 'He's gone to Beaumont Hospital.' And I phoned my husband, and he had been out in Dun Laoghaire and he came back into Beaumont Hospital. And they told us (my son) was critical, and I didn't see him for two days, the guard wouldn't even let me look at him. I couldn't see him, I couldn't touch him, it was like nothing to do with me. I was pushed aside. Then they just took my husband away and the guards said to identify him. And my husband said to me, 'You don't want to see him (because he's so hurt)"...I kept saying please, I didn't know what was going on after that. But (the detective) was the one who got me the permission eventually, because I kept saying I don't want to talk to anybody, I didn't want to know anything that was going on, just to see him. And they let me see him, eventually. I got permission...

But there's another place where people can go and take the decision out of your hands and they think they're doing the right thing for you...These are things that people take out of your hands. I didn't want to know about (the rest), or what was going on with the guards, all the coming and going. All I wanted was could I see (the deceased)." (FMV1-P5)

It appeared to be important for relatives that they were at least given the *option* of viewing the body.

"I was only talking to (my sister) there the other night about this. I mean, she only remembered this last week, you know, that she was never given the opportunity of going in...You know, (my sister) was the next-of-kin, so she should have been the one that was notified, you know, to identify (the deceased) and given the choice whether or not she wanted to go in." (FMV1-P8)

"I did ask could I go in, but I was told he wasn't there." (FMV1-P9)

"No, he wasn't there, he was gone." (FMV1-P8)

"So I had to go home." (FMV1-P9)

"But, it's the whole system, the whole thing, you know. You're not given any choice. You're told you can't see him." (FMV1-P8)

"The decision's taken out of your hands." (FMV1-P9)

"As far as I know, even (the deceased's) immediate, his own family weren't given the choice whether to go in at all, you know? They only wanted someone to go in and identify him, and then that was it." (FMV1-P8)

Another issue that came up frequently during both focus groups was the need for information relating to both the case and the services available for families of murder victims.

Whether the lack of information was perceived or actual, it continually appeared to lead to frustration amongst participants.

"I think the thing we needed was information. You never knew when it was going to court, you had to ring when it was going to court. I mean, we should be told when it was going to court." (FMV2-P2)

"The guards weren't giving out information whatsoever, you know, about what happened. I came to Victim Support in the beginning to find out more about the guards. They tried to help me that way, but the guards wouldn't give us any information. And still aren't, really...You'd have to listen to the radio, sit by the radio, waiting to hear." (FMV1-P7)

"The (guard) that's looking after (my brother-in-law's) case, you know, (my sister) doesn't exist...They forget, you know, they don't seem to tell us what's going on...So, we're not kept informed. (My sister) is not kept informed." (FMV1-P8)

A sister-in-law of a victim described how she felt that some information was being withheld from her, and she was glad to be able to see the photographic evidence at the trial.

"I even actually asked to see all the photographs...I begged them and they showed them to me. But I was delighted that I did...I have to say when I seen them photographs, I was stunned. Because I felt that we weren't told the truth...When I saw those photographs, I was amazed and I thought the break would never come until I got to see one of the detectives. And my first words was, when I seen them, cause we were told that (my husband's) sister was strangled, and that's as much as you got. But when I saw the photographs, and the state of her, and all the bruising that I seen, and I was saying, like 'Where's all this coming from?' You're talking about 9 years later. And they were saying, 'But we didn't think you needed to know.' It's worse than if they tell you, when you go to court and you find out all these things." (FMV1-P4)

In this case, it appeared that it was unhelpful for the Gardaí to have withheld information from the family.

One mother of a murder victim described the time that the offender, who was in prison at the time, appeared on national television. The family was not informed that this would be happening.

"He came on while we were eating our dinner and the lads were saying how his hair had grown long, it was tied back, and I said, 'Look who's on!' and I nearly choked and they said, 'Ah no, it's not.' And I said, 'That's him there,' and the next thing (the play was on) and it was, he was doing West Side Story. It was about a stabbing, and this was what I couldn't understand. I mean, they could have given me a choice about whether to look at it or not, and if they'd have told us beforehand. But he was able to just come into our kitchen. And, I mean, that's the way it's been all the time, your nose is rubbed in it." (FMV1-P5)

Information in relation to the court trial was seen to be important. As discussed in the court trial section, most family members choose to go along to all court hearings. It is helpful for them to be given these dates so that they can attend.

"The last time your man was up in court, we were told, 'Ah, sure, there's no point in yous going, it's only going to be a formality and the arraignment will be on in another couple of weeks.' But that didn't happen at all. The trial date was set then and there. Now, we didn't know that, but I'm sure (the accused) knew that when he was going on." (FMV1-P8)

"You see, it's taken out of your hands completely, even though you're the family...It's taken away from you and you're not brought into it at all. You're only told the day that it's going to be in court, or whatever, the thing is going to be in court." (FMV2-P3)

"Sure, we didn't even know (the offender) was arrested. A neighbour of mine came in and told me." (FMV1-P5)

Furthermore, when information about the court trial and the criminal justice system is given to them, families feel that they are taken into consideration instead of left on the sideline. It has also been explored how important it is to families that they are aware of any pending release or early release of an offender. One mother of a murder victim described how she heard about a possible early release in the local supermarket.

"A woman only said that to me this evening, in the supermarket. 'Our friend,' she said, 'I heard our friend got another 7 years.' I said, 'Our friend?' 'Your man.' And I'm with my daughter, I thought she was going to be sick and then she tells me when we walk out of the supermarket, she says, 'Mum, that's what I heard as well.' But, they weren't telling me this. (Another day) I was bringing my other son, the eldest lad, for an interview out in Blanchardstown and says he, 'Can I ask you something? Have you heard anything about your man?' Nobody refers to him by his name, it's always 'your man'. And I said, 'Why? You've obviously heard something.' And he said, 'I heard he might be getting out in July. Can you find out anything for us?' So I rang, and I said, 'Is it actually possible if he gets the time off, that he'll be out in July?' But he hasn't actually got back to me in the last couple of weeks." (FMV1-P5)

When information *was* provided, this appeared to be appreciated.

"In fairness to the guards, where we were concerned, they actually were very forthcoming with their support. There was a female guard, detective, who sat with my mother and asked to sit with her on her own, you know, for the family to leave them, and she sat and spoke to my mother and she explained all about Victim Support. Now, maybe she was a supporter or maybe a feeling-person, but she actually explained everything to my mother about the group, and what Victim Support does, and maybe we should try them. And then she talked to me, and she told me about Victim Support for children of bereaved, and she gave me telephone numbers, and I actually

programmed them into my mobile phone. And they were extremely good, initially, you know, they were." (FMV1-P10)

One participant suggested that a good way of getting information across would be for the Gardaí to leave an information booklet for families to browse through.

"I think the detectives or the police should leave you something. You mightn't look at it for a week or two, but it's there." (FMV1-P4)

"That's how we came across even just information, because when we went through the funeral home, we were given, each of us were given, a booklet on when someone dies and it has all sorts of information. And in it, there's information on how to deal with your children when they come across death, and the things to say to them, the things to encourage them to do, and it was great to help us to cope with our own children." (FMV1-P1)

"You should be given that initially. You know, when they come to your house to tell you, you should be given a booklet." (FMV1-P8)

"It's not even necessary that you would pick it up, just that someone would." (FMV1-P1)

The Media

Several participants had a negative response to their experience with the media.

"The papers painted such a horrendous picture, people didn't know what way to (respond)...I'd like to know if there's anything we can do about the control of what they print? You know, should they be allowed to come up, straight after the murder case, to the family? It's horrendous." (FMV1-P6)

"The media have control over the flow of information...They came out to our house and knocked, and knocked, and knocked, and we told them to go

away, and away, and away, and they still came back. And then they printed something that no-one had said. You know, one of us had said, 'No comment,' and it was like, 'The Distraught Sister.' That's poetic licence, and if you work in the media, or in journalism at all, or even if you write a book, whatever you decide to do, poetic licence is there. And they will print whatever they think will sell newspapers, or they will film what they think will get people watching news...And no matter how hard you try, you're not going to change them." (FMV1-P10)

"Well, they shouldn't have the right to go barging on your doors. They shouldn't have the right to do that." (FMV1-P8)

One mother of a murder victim described her shock upon seeing the offender on national television.

"He'd been on television, doing West Side Story. That's how I ended up on the Late Late Show for Victim Support, because we were told we would be informed if there was anything going on. I wrote to (the director of the prison), I wrote to RTE, they never answered. But eventually, I sent another letter to RTE and they said they apologised, in as much as they would try, and they would keep it in mind and try and warn people if there was going to be something on the television, but they couldn't do it (for news items) if it was only going to be a short piece of time. So, they basically don't care." (FMV1-P5)

"We were hounded by the media...One of the good things was, in the police's defence, they ushered us out the door and kept the media away from us at the end of the trial. They only want to sell the paper, they don't care." (FMV2-P2)

"They don't care what they write." (FMV2-P3)

"You're just a number. You're just the next story, aren't you really?...The headlines that were faxed over to me were, 'I want her dead,' 'I want her dead.' This is what I (was meant to be saying)...And my children, seeing this on the newspaper. I was misquoted completely. So, the media, I have no time for the media. No time for them. They will print what they want, not what the truth is." (FMV2-P4)

Another lady described how hard it was for her family when the media repeatedly referred to the case, even years later.

"To this day, we're still reading about (the deceased) in the paper. As soon as anybody else is killed, even the girl in D-, (the deceased) is brought up again.

Sure, even once there, a reporter...was doing a thing on...one of the (cases) that happened around the same weekend as (my sister-in-law's) murder. And they were doing this thing, they were showing the girl, and here's on the front of The Star, (my sister in law's) picture smattered all over it. And here I am, 'Jesus, how could that be?' My daughter at the time nearly got sick when she seen it. And the name (of the other victim) was underneath it. And I had to ring them up and say, 'What are you doing? That's (my sister in law's) photograph.' They had the wrong photograph in the paper!" (FMV1-P4)

Another participant worried about how the deceased's character was portrayed in the papers.

"And in our situation now, our mother is worried about what people think about (the deceased) because this guy was let go home. Do people think (the deceased) deserved what he got? Have people's images changed of him? I mean, we've constantly got to reassure her. We know what he was like, that he would never...But it's the papers, and other people around who read the papers..." (FMV1-P1

"(When I see) that on the media, or on the television, I just say, 'Now, are you listening to the way they just said that, did you hear now what they just said?' With no regard for the mother or sisters or family that are in the house watching. Because even if it is somebody else, it triggers off what happened to yours. They've no regard for the family, they're just reporting it." (FMV1-P5)

One participant could see a potentially positive role for the media, in creating public awareness about how the criminal justice system works.

"Nobody realises, nobody knows what goes on until it hits your own doorstep. Now you're talking about the media as well. They could come in very handy, because people are not aware of what goes on. And they should know what goes on in the court system." (FMV1-P8)

The Social Services

Participants were asked about their experiences with the social services, what needs they had from the service, and if any gaps in service provision existed.

In both focus group discussions, participants appeared unclear as to what the social services were and what they could do for them. It was explained by the researcher that the social services covered all statutory support such as social welfare, health boards, counselling services, etc. Contacts in general seemed to be minimal.

"As regards social welfare, or anything like that, we got nothing whatsoever. We had to go banging on doors, running round places, running round like headless chickens, trying to get help for (the immediate family). There was nothing...No-one wanted to know, really. There was nobody there, just nobody...When (my sister) was at the hospital, nobody came knocking on the door...I said, 'Yeah, I'm going to take care of the kids,' but

did *they* know I was going to take care of the kids?...Nobody came knocking on the door and saying 'Who's looking after these kids here?' " (FMV1-P8)

"It's actually a horrible thing, because if you pay your taxes and you do everything, you know, that's fine. They don't know, maybe, whether you exist. But if you're on social welfare...social services should move in immediately and support the children. And I mean, I'm talking about children from birth until 18. If they're still living in the family home, and they've no income, and their whole income came from their parents, social services should be in there, should walk in and say, 'We're here to help you, does your child need counselling?' " (FMV1-P10)

"You feel they should go out of their way for you in a situation like this. They should make a big effort, or something." (FMV1-P6)

"The facilities should be there." (FMV2-P4)

"Services, definitely. There should be services there." (FMV2-P2)

A sister of a murder victim recalled that her brother and his wife had been on social welfare, and therefore were known to the Department of Social Welfare and the Eastern Health Board. Despite this, no statutory agency enquired after or offered counselling to the children.

"Social services never appeared. And that's full stop. Social welfare, childline, whatever. And there were children involved in his death. Nobody gave a hoot about them. Who was looking after the children during the whole incarceration of my brother's body? His wife had been charged. Who was taking care of the children? They assumed the family was going to take care of them. They never appeared. The first thing they should have done was knocked on the door. My brother was living in local authority housing, and therefore (they should have been aware). It was on the news

he was killed in the house and they knew there was children there, so they knew he didn't work, they knew she didn't work, so who was feeding (the children)? Who was providing for them?" (FMV1-P10)

As discussed under "Support for children", murder had an effect on the children. This created a need for child support and counselling services, but most participants agreed that this need was not met by any agency.

"See, (my sister's) kids have suffered something desperate because of the murder, but the nearer ones (to the deceased), well it's just chronic at this stage. It's absolutely chronic. I'm tearing my hair out, I don't know what to do with them." (FMV1-P9)

"I used to sit with (my child), on his bed, when he couldn't sleep. We could have done with somebody detached form the situation to try and explain things to him better rather than what I did, without crying all the time, cause I was in such a state. But I had to get up in the morning and continue on." (FMV1-P5)

A wife of a murder victim, who was left with three young children, had a difficult time finding help for the children. Her sister described the difficulty.

"You know, I had places that I had rang, Rathoath, I rang Trim, I rang Navan...and they kept putting me through to different areas of the Health Board system. I went into one in Trim, I didn't know where I was going...I had to go around knocking on doors, you know, all the time. And I remember one in particular, I said to her, 'Look, there's an 8 year old here who needs help, and he doesn't need it six months later down the line, he needs it now. He's going around with a knife and he's threatening, because that's his way (of coping)." (FMV1-P8)

"He started threatening he was going to commit suicide." (FMV1-P9)

"(And she replied) 'Em, hold on a second, we'll be in touch with you.' She never rang me back. Never rang us back at all. We were left, it was only until (my sister) ended up in the mental hospital before they done anything. And they're still not doing enough, because the damage is already set into that child." (FMV1-P8)

A sister of a murder victim sought out counselling herself for her young son. However, no counselling was offered to the victim's children.

"Well, my son's eight, and when (my brother) was killed, he was six. He saw him every day. I've had him to two counsellors; I've had to take him because school just went out the window. But nobody gave me help. You know, nobody kind of said...My brother had one exactly the same age as my son, there's just two days between them, and nobody has helped that child. He is living at the moment, this is all fear for him, he knows it's coming, the court case, and (the perpetrator) is his mother that killed his father...And I brought my child to counselling, and been able to kind of get him there, and that's okay because he's my child. But nobody's looking after the victim's children." (FMV1-P10)

"It's very hard to get them out. My young fella, he's ten now, and he can't sit still, even at school...I used to sit with him on his bed, when he couldn't sleep. We could have done with somebody detached from the situation to try and explain things to him better than what I did, without crying all the time, cause I was in such a state." (FMV1-P5)

One lady had a suggestion as to how the support could be offered to children.

"Don't you think if someone maybe called and said, 'Hello, I'm Jim, I know the story, would you like to talk to me?' Children are more comfortable in their own environment, they tend to be themselves, you know? If you have to take them somewhere and they see people walking

around...Because when you're a child, you're perceptive and you're saying, 'Where are we going, there's something wrong here.' And all of a sudden you're introducing him to people." (FMV-P10)

Some participants felt that the offender's family were being better looked after by the social services than the victim's family.

"They look after the murderers better than us, and there's no doubt about it." (FMV1-P8)

"(The offender's) two kids were cycling around on their brand new bikes at Christmas, and I was in my car that (my sister) pays for. And the small one says, 'Mammy, why has (the offender's) kids have two new bikes and you won't fix mine?' I can't afford to get the stupid thing fixed, there's something not right. There's something not right." (FMV1-P9)

"It's not the children's fault. But you can't help feeling bitter." (FMV1-P10)

"Yeah, the whole system here is totally wrong." (FMV1-P2)

"She (the offender) has the services of a psychiatrist, she has the services of a psychologist, she has the services of anybody she wants. She's got medical services as well. I mean, every pill we've bought has to be paid for. Every visit to the doctor has to be paid for. Every visit to a counsellor has to be paid for...I think it would be appropriate if there were services there for victims. Psychiatric services, that kind of thing. And their dependants...The help should be there as "carte blanc", and maybe there shouldn't be any money transactions at all." (FMV2-P2)

"I think the State should pay for the whole funeral and the headstone. I do, I think they should pay for all that...You're not expecting someone in your family to come along and be murdered. So, what if there's another half-dozen younger children? You haven't got that type of money. I just think the State should pay for it. " (FMV2-P3)

"I think if a life is taken, I think the State should, you're right." (FMV2-P4)

"Pay for everything, all expenses to do with the funeral." (FMV2-P2)

A woman whose husband was murdered described her reluctance to visit social services.

"I don't want anything off them. They only make you feel like dirt...If you go up and say that you've nothing, you're asked this question, that question, you're asked everything, you know/ You're only made to feel like dirt. I wouldn't even approach them I just live on what I have and that's it." (FMV2-P1)

The area of financial effects and compensation will be revisited below. (See "Financial and Compensation Needs")

The Coroner's Court

One participant described how upsetting it was for family members to hear the evidence presented at the Coroner's Court.

"So, (some family members) went...to the small inquest at the coroner's court. So, (the State Pathologist) was speaking to them, sure you could only catch a few things, you know, all these big words, saying this and that...But they know he had a terrible death. So, (the deceased's) brother just clicked off, you know what I mean? He was just numb, you know? And the two girls were roaring crying, one on each side of him. So then, when that was over, they went out to the car and they didn't come back for a few hours. They just kept driving, driving, driving. My husband's brother and the two girls with him, they just kept driving, driving. It was so upsetting, you know? But I didn't need to go to the (inquest), I didn't want to hear anything any more. I just wanted to go from day to day like I'm doing at the moment." (FMV2-P1)

Some felt the need for support during the process.

"I think what you should do in Victim Support is be there...We sat there a couple of times, in the coroner's court, and on one occasion the coroner came in and, I mean, you don't know (anything). Are we sitting in the right seat? And (the offender, who was a family member in this case) came, so you have to bear in mind the murderer's there and we're there. So you're sitting there and it's very aggravating. And the coroner asked, 'Are the family here?' And the guard of course immediately points to us. And then he was (getting mixed up with who was who). We were enraged by the coroner.

Then my brother who identified (the deceased) had to go up and then he had to swear on the bible. Nobody told him he'd have to take the bible in his hand and swear, and he was lost. He was looking at us. I was just kind of saying, 'Please, C-,' cause he's not into the church anyway. So he was, you know, not prepared. Totally unprepared.

And then they read out the medical cause of death. No details, just the medical cause of death. Because there's a murder trial, they don't say anything, like we got something like haemoglobin trauma to the left ventricle, blah blah blah. And one of my sisters is a doctor's secretary and I could see her going pale, and she said to me, 'He bled to death.' I said, 'No, he didn't say that,' and she said, 'He did. He bled to death.' And then (the offender's) sitting there, and we're trying to hold the boys back, telling them to please leave the room.

And nobody's there saying, 'You're okay.' Like if (Victim Support) were there, if your people were there, to say, 'Okay, he's going to come in, he's going to say this, there's not going to be a lot of information for you because there's a murder trial.' And if you know that going in, then you'll just relax, you take what you hear." (FMV1-P10)

The same participant made the point that it is very hard for families to hear what is going on.

"You can't really hear them, which is very difficult. Because they don't have a good sound system, and it's not a big room but the acoustics are very bad. Not like courts...And you're (straining to hear)." (FMV1-P10)

There appeared to be some confusion over why more than one inquest would have to be held. In Group 1, participant 10 told the group that the coroner actually approached the family at the end of the inquest and told them that when they appeared before him again, he would be in a better position to explain things to them. Participant 2 asked what they would want to go back in for, and participant 10 replied that she didn't know. There appeared to be information needs surrounding the practices and procedures of the coroner's court.

Financial and Compensation Needs

Participants spoke about their financial needs in the aftermath of the murder.

"I mean, the difference in (my sister's) situation, I mean (it's) the main bread winner that's gone...And, I mean, only for us she would've been living in poverty, complete poverty." (FMV1-P8)

"You can't even...when they buzz off to a playground, or some kind of sports centre or something, everything they ask you it's 'No.' No, no, no. And I mean, they're getting into my face, especially the small one. 'Our dad was going to bring us to Scotland. Me da was going to do this, me da was going to do that,' and I feel like saying, 'It's not my fault.

The money I get (from Social Welfare) would not feed a teenager. I've a teenager at home and he'd eat seven dinners a day, he would, no problem. He's just constantly eating and I'm looking at the rent book. And then I end up borrowing off someone like (my sister) to put food on the table to feed the kids." (FMV1-P9)

There were also financial needs at the time of the court trial.

"Two of our sisters had to go home in the middle of the trial. One had to go home to England and the other had to go to America, they couldn't stay. I think that's a total disgrace. I mean, there should be some money set aside, I mean those trials don't go on that long. (But for the offender), everything would be done no problem. He'd be brought in and out and given whatever he wanted. They're the things that need to be changed." (FMV1-P4)

It appeared that most participants were not aware of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal until after the death. Indeed, at that, most found out through Victim Support or through other parties that there was money available.

"A relation of (my husband's) came over and said, 'Do you know there's a 'tear money' out?'...We actually had to go after it. It took someone else to tell me." (FMV1-P4)

"We only heard from (participant 10) and from coming here, about the criminal injuries claim." (FMV1-P1)

"Our solicitor said it to (my wife). And I in turn said it to a few people that had people murdered, and they didn't know anything about it." (FMV2-P2)

"What seems to be coming across here again is that it's word of mouth, it's not information that's available." (Facilitator)

General noises of agreement.

Participants felt that the time they needed the money most was in the immediate aftermath of the death, to pay for funeral and living expenses and to help them get back on their feet. Delays in payment due to paperwork and red tape caused frustration for families.

"But the thing is, the hardest time is, you need it now. This is the hardest time, with the kids." (FMV1-P9)

"And no-one is there to give you a hand...Even if there was a body that could step in and say, 'Look, we'll get you through this time.' " (FMV1-P10)

"You know, it's doing more and more damage. When (my husband) was murdered, my daughter was a twelve-year-old without a care. She turned into a little woman overnight. I always wanted, cause you know we weren't exactly rich, but I'd be able to go out and buy her fancy things, girlie things, nice things, but now I can't do it, you know, I just can't do it any more. It's horrible to have just one girl and you can't do what you want to do in the first place. It's just, it's crazy. Absolutely crazy. And why do I have to wait so long..?...I can't understand why they'd let someone suffer through the crucial times when the money's going to be there anyway. You know, it's so unfair. I mean, what good is it?...I've applied for compensation, but I haven't heard anything for so long." (FMV1-P9)

"The money only comes after you've been through the whole lot, which is crazy altogether. It only arrives after the trial and so forth...And you've already, you might have gone four or five years, it all depends on when this person goes to court. So, there you are on doctor's bills, chemist's tablets, the whole goddamn lot. You're pouring out money you probably don't even have, or you're borrowing money to pay for this kind of stuff. So, I mean, it's stupid, the compensation coming years and years later. To some people, it's just not on." (FMV2-P4)

Even when families were compensated, some felt it was not enough.

"I did get a few pounds, a few thousand, off the State. Three and a half thousand, I think it was...I thought they should have given you more. I mean, what did that do? You know what I mean, for a life, for a thing like that? I think the funeral bill was £2000." (FMV1-P10)

"In view of how much we've spent, medically, we've spent the whole £7000 plus ourselves...I do think it's my right to get better than what I got. I do think it's my right to get more compensation that what we got." (FMV2-P2)

"I think if a life has been taken in Ireland, the government should pay all expenses." (FMV2-P4)

"I think the State should pay for the whole funeral and the headstone...Pay for everything, all expenses to do with the funeral." (FMV1-P3)

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal asks applicants to provide receipts or documentation relating to expenses caused by the death. However, in some cases this is hard to quantify.

"(In our family) there's nine brothers and four sisters and we all had expense for the whole time. We all suffered different losses in respective things...My sister and brother were on holiday in Portugal, and it cost them thousands to get here. I mean, who decides who gets what?" (FMV1-P10)

All immediate family of the deceased are entitled to some form of compensation. However, because the overall compensation figure is finite, the figure is divided up between the number of family members who apply. Of course, those dependent on the deceased receive more that those who were not financially dependent, but any division of the compensation total can mean that less is left over for the financial dependants. In some cases, family members who were not financially dependent on the deceased sign a waiver, so that the financial dependants can receive more of the compensation total.

This happened with a family in focus group 1. The deceased's adult brother signed a waiver to ensure that the dependent young family of the deceased

received more money. However, he ended up not being compensated for his own expenses.

"(My brother-in-law) went through serious expense, very very serious expense. The whole funeral took place in his house, and the amount of people coming in, drinking tea and smoking away. It's endless expense. How do you cope with that?" (FMV1-P9)

Red tape surrounding the application for compensation often made participants feel uncomfortable.

"They brought...(the victim's) father and mother into them. They'd had a few meetings before they gave them the money, it was like as if they were getting assessed." (FMV1-P4)

"But as well as that, you feel...putting in for it, putting in for money..." (FMV2-P2)

"Yeah, it's like as if you're..." (FMV2-P4)

"...you're making money or something, on the back of the death...(Medical) help should be there as 'carte blanc' and maybe there shouldn't be any money transactions at all." (FMV2-P2)

Another time, the rules surrounding compensation seemed offensive to a family.

"He told me that it's not the same for (the siblings of the victim) because they're all married, they weren't living in the house. (It's like) she's only important to you if you're living in the house." (FMV1-P4)

Needs Analysis Study

Section 4: Discussion and Recommendations of Families of Murder Victims' Focus Groups

In summation, numerous needs, issues, feelings and observations came out of the two families of murder victims' focus groups. Some were psychological needs, feelings and effects. Some were practical needs that had direct relevance to certain agencies in contact with victims. Where needs can or ought to be met by particular agencies, recommendations are made accordingly.

Psychological effects of murder

The psychological effects of murder on the bereaved family were varied, prolonged and severe. Emotional, behavioural, cognitive and mental health effects were clearly identified.

Emotional effects took the form of sadness, loneliness, general feelings of fear, fear in relation to the forthcoming court trial, anger towards the offender and anger towards the criminal justice system. Changes in normal behaviour patterns were described as not eating, staying up at night, nightmares, crying, behaving as though in shock and avoiding going out of the house. Feeling a loss of control was also recognised by some participants.

Participants had many views on what they saw as their part in the criminal justice system and about offenders' treatment within the system: views and opinions resulting from the murder incident can be regarded as cognitive effects of the crime, as can coping mechanisms which are described below. The mental health effect mentioned most commonly was post-traumatic stress disorder, although suicidal feelings and depression also featured.

Children also suffered negative psychological effects, which caused parents a good deal of anxiety.

Coping mechanisms

No particular pattern emerged in relation to the way families coped in the aftermath of murder, although some did describe some definite ways that they themselves had coped. Each of the participants who expressed how they had coped, had a different way of coping that they had worked out for themselves. One theme that ran through the coping mechanisms, however, was the need for a positive outlook on what had happened, for the sake of the bereaved, for the sake of the other family members and for the sake of helping other similarly bereaved families in the future. The way that somebody evaluates and looks upon their situation can also be viewed as a cognitive effect of crime.

Support needs

As well as support during the court trial, support was needed immediately after the murder and through the long-term.

Participants agreed that it would be better for support to be offered by agencies on an outreach basis, rather than their having to come and look for it.

Support from immediate family and friends was deemed important. It was helpful for supporters to call and show that they were thinking of them, but not to ask nosey questions. Social company appeared to be appreciated, and for families to know that the support would not dwindle as time passed.

There was a need to speak with somebody who had been similarly bereaved.

Support for children was badly needed and it appeared that this need is not being adequately met by any agency at present. Again, child support needs to be offered on an outreach basis, and perhaps in the child's home.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to support needs

Victim Support, having at present the only service on offer to families of murder victims in Ireland, has a huge role to play in meeting the expressed needs and suggestions of the families.

Families have expressed a need for support in the aftermath of the murder, and for this support to be offered on an outreach basis. This outreach support could come in the form of a direct contact from the organisation to the family, or via the Gardaí. It was suggested during one of the discussions that the Gardaí could supply the family with information about support agencies and Victim Support.

If the Gardaí are to give information to the family about Victim Support, they need to be up-to-date on the service offered by the organisation and exactly how and who to contact. Thus, contact between Victim Support and the Gardaí needs to be continuously maintained.

The levels of support needed appear to be high. Support needs can be divided into emotional support and practical support.

Focus group participants described the emotional effects of murder on themselves and their family. Victim Support volunteers need to be trained to be able to deal with these emotions and to be able to support the bereaved family member through them.

The role of Victim Support and its services, including its limitations, should be clearly explained to service users at the outset. This would avoid any disillusionment about what is on offer and what the organisation can do.

It can be helpful for someone bereaved by murder to be offered the opportunity of speaking to someone who has been similarly bereaved. Peer

support offers a different kind of support to the support offered by an objective outsider. Participants acknowledged that Victim Support does regularly endeavour to run a support group, and they emphasised the need for the group to be well structured and facilitated.

Support groups, whilst helpful to those who wish to participate, are fraught with their own difficulties, such as ensuring there are enough participants, ensuring that nobody over-participates, keeping the discussion moving and not allowing it to get 'stale'. In the event that facilitating a support group ever proves too difficult, it is possible that a one-to-one peer support system could be introduced. In the cases where bereaved persons have met on a smaller, or even individual scale, it has proved helpful and supportive. It is the recommendation of this report that an individual peer support system be considered, either as an alternative to the support group, or as a fall-back in case the support group is ever discontinued.

Emotional support is extremely important to a family in the aftermath of murder. However, the results of the focus groups clearly show that their need for practical support and information is equal to, if not greater than, their need for emotional support. It is possible that the families already received a high amount of emotional support already from Victim Support, thus leading them to discuss their practical and information needs more frequently. In any case, it is not the recommendation of this report to reduce the level of emotional support offered in favour of practical support. However, the results do clearly lead to a recommendation of a higher level of practical support in the form of information-giving, education and administrative assistance than is currently on offer from Victim Support.

Families appear to be in great need of education and information from a well-informed and objective source, on Irish criminal law; how it operates, the role of the various players within the system, what to expect as the

system investigates, charges, prosecutes, sentences and releases an offender, and where to voice complaints, suggestions and feedback. Families also need a source that they are in regular contact with to ask any questions that may come up for them or to offer them with information that they may be unaware of, such as applying for injunctions or victims' rights within the criminal justice system.

It appears that giving families such information makes them feel that they have been considered in the process instead of feeling left out. Indeed, it is probable that education about the criminal justice system could lead to less dissatisfaction about the process and less disappointment in the event that things do not work out as hoped.

Victim Support can play a huge role in educating and informing families about the criminal justice system. The organisation could also facilitate meetings with a legal representative, who could explain the workings of the system to families and volunteers. Although such practical information is already somewhat on offer from Victim Support, the results of the focus groups still show confusion and lack of knowledge on the part of families, leading to the conclusion that these needs are still not being fully met.

It is a further recommendation that Victim Support advocates the needs and concerns of families to legal and judicial personnel via the appropriate channels. Where groups such as the Court Users Group exist, regular contact should be made to voice needs on the families' behalf. Where such groups do not exist, perhaps the needs could be voiced in the form of written submissions to or meetings with various legal personnel. The media could also be used to promote awareness of families' needs, concerns and suggestions.

As far as the court trial is concerned, Victim Support again has a huge role to play. Both emotional support and practical support/information are especially needed at the time of the trial. Families have expressed their need to prepare for the court trial in advance, and to meet with the support volunteer(s) before the trial actually begins. They need to be acquainted not only with the layout of the court itself, but with the situation of any facilities that they might need.

As the court trial proceeds, families need their questions answered and the procedure explained. If graphic evidence is going to be produced, they like to be warned.

Families have voiced a need to meet with prosecuting counsel before the trial begins. It is understood that if family members are to appear as witnesses, such a meeting may not be possible. If it is not possible, the prosecution needs to explain why to the family to avoid confusion. However, if family members are not appearing as witnesses, it may often be possible to grant their wish. Victim Support could have a role to play in facilitating either a meeting or an explanation as to why not.

Families have expressed their need to have a say in how the crime has impacted on their lives. This can be done in the form of a Victim Impact Statement. Unless called as a witness, it is the family's only chance of participation at the trial. Victim Support could promote awareness of the Victim Impact Statement to families and inform them how to ask the judge to call for one. Similarly, as Victim Impact Statements are a rather new concept, Victim Support could promote their usage amongst the judiciary and explain how important it is to families that they are requested.

Families also expressed confusion and a lack of information surrounding the coroner's court. Similar to the criminal court, Victim Support could

have a role in showing the family around the coroner's court, explaining the role of the coroner and what will transpire during the hearing, the reasons for any adjournment and what a witness at the court can expect. At present, it appears that such a service does not exist, yet is needed.

Finally, administrative support such as the filling out of forms, or facilitating meetings with a third party to fill out forms, is often needed when a family loses someone suddenly. Many people who have not been bereaved before do not know what procedures to undertake. Certain information may be lacking, such as how to apply for compensation or what paperwork to attach to the application form. The assistance of Victim Support is needed here to explain the administration procedure and to put the family in touch with the most appropriate person to assist them.

In summary, emotional support is needed on a continuous and regular basis, from the time the murder is committed through to the court trial and beyond. Initially, a high degree of emotional support is required for both adults and children in the family. The gap in child counselling services has been illustrated in the focus groups, but where services do exist, Victim Support needs to play an active role in assisting the family to make contact with these services.

Needs relating to the criminal justice system

The criminal justice system was perceived to be weighted in favour of the offender and erring on the side of overly protecting the rights of the offender.

Legal and medical services offered to the offender and not to the victim's family caused dissatisfaction.

Disappointment was expressed over how offenders are punished by the criminal justice system. Many participants believed the punishments meted

out were too light and would not deter a future offender from committing a similar crime.

Disillusionment with the justice system existed in cases where the alleged offender was let go on a technicality or due to legal loopholes.

There appeared to be a lack of knowledge of the criminal justice system and laws relating to prosecution, sentencing, bail and release of offenders. The lack of knowledge created confusion and dissatisfaction among participants. Participants did not have a lot to say on the subject of restorative justice and opinions were mixed. Attitudes tended to be punitive rather than restorative.

Recommendations relating to the criminal justice system

In order to address the perceived needs of victims in relation to the criminal justice system, the current system would need to be changed. This is a tall order, and changes are not likely to happen overnight. It can only be recommended to victim support agencies be mindful of victims' perceived inadequacies of justice and to continue to advocate victims' rights within the justice system.

Needs surrounding the court trial

Defamation of the victim's character in court caused concern to families.

Some families voiced a desire to have their own representation in court. Some asked why other negative activities of the accused, outside of the evidence relating to that particular case, could not be presented to the judge and jury. Again, these issues pointed to a lack of information and education about the Irish legal system.

A request was voiced to meet with prosecuting counsel before the commencement of the trial. It was not understood why this could not be arranged, particularly if the family themselves were not called as witnesses during the trial.

There appeared to be a need for families to have a say in court.

The Victim Impact Statement was perceived in a positive light, but there were needs surrounding the creation of awareness of the Statement amongst families and the judiciary, and education about why it is compiled and how to request its compilation.

There was a need for support during the court trial. Families voiced a desire to meet with the support volunteer(s) in advance of the court trial date.

Practical support needs emerged, such as their need to be acquainted with the layout of the court, and the layout of the surrounding area (where toilet is, where restaurant is, where one may smoke, etc.) Participants agreed that knowing this information relieves some anxiety.

Similar to the need for information and education about the legal system, there was a need for the court trial process to be explained as it went on, and their questions answered.

Participants agreed that preparation for the court trial should take place from well in advance.

There was a voiced need for witnesses to review their statements well in advance of appearing in the witness box.

Shock and distress occurred in cases where graphic evidence that the family was not aware of was produced in court.

Families found it difficult to be in close proximity to the accused over the duration of the trial. In a few cases, close proximity led to physical or verbal contact between the two sides, and this proved distressing.

Of the 11 participants whose cases had already come to court, all 11 chose to attend the court trial. Attending the trial was important for families and they needed to be told exactly when the trial dates would be.

Recommendations in relation to the court trial

Similar to the criminal justice system, families perceived inadequacies in relation to the court trial. Some saw it as weighed in favour of the offender instead of the victim. Changing the system cannot be done overnight, but

once again it is the remit of the victim support agencies to represent the victims' concerns to the relevant statutory bodies.

The Victim Support Court Witness Service can play a large role in alleviating the distress caused to families during the court trial. Those who accepted the assistance of the court witness service were positive in their comments about how support and information had helped them. It appeared helpful for as much information as possible about the trial to be given to families in advance, as it helps them to prepare and feel included.

It is a recommendation that the judiciary as a matter of course, call for the preparation of a Victim Impact Statement on the family of the murder victim, before passing sentence on the accused.

Needs from the Gardaí

It was apparent that families looked to the Gardaí, not only to investigate and solve the crime but for support and information.

There was a need for a huge amount of sensitivity when breaking the news and for this to be done by an experienced and empathic member of the Gardaí.

Participants saw the Gardaí as facilitators of viewing the body. It was important for families to be offered the opportunity of viewing the body of the deceased to say goodbye.

There was a need for information and education surrounding the role of the Gardaí and procedures relating to questioning and arrests. Lack of information seemed to cause dissatisfaction.

A need emerged for feedback from the Gardaí about the progress of the case. Lack of feedback resulted in lack of information, leading to dissatisfaction and confusion.

Subsequent recommendations to the Gardai

The focus groups revealed that the participants saw the Gardaí as more than the agency that investigates the crime. Indeed, the bereaved family often looked to the Gardaí as support givers and information providers. It appears, however, that many of the family's needs could fall under the remit of the Garda Liaison Officer (GLO) who is appointed at the outset to liaise with the family.

In the initial stages, when emotional support needs are highest, families asked if the Gardaí could inform them about the support available to them, such as Victim Support. It would be important for the Gardaí to be well-informed about Victim Support and its services, as well as the best way to contact them.

When breaking the news, it ensued from the discussions that it would be best for an experienced and empathic member of the Gardaí to break the news. All other members involved in the investigation should clearly ascertain the identification of anybody who makes enquiries, as it has transpired in the past that news was insensitively broken by mistake to the mother of a victim who made an innocent enquiry. It would be important for all members to bear this in mind, such as those guarding the crime scene or working in the vicinity.

Bereaved family members have a need to see the body of the deceased for closure, to acknowledge the death fully and to say goodbye. Gardaí should facilitate this wherever possible. If the body has been damaged, perhaps any undamaged part could be left exposed instead. When asking for identification, Gardai should allow the family to decide who is to go and ensure the immediate next of kin is involved in the decision.

To avoid confusion later on, it is recommended that the Gardaí explain their role to the family. Families are also in need of information about the criminal justice system, namely investigating a crime, charging an offender, bail, prosecution, sentencing and release of offenders. It is a recommendation that if this information is lacking, the Gardaí should endeavour to supply it. A shortage of such information leads to confusion, dissatisfaction and distress.

Families also have a need to be kept abreast of what is happening with the case. Lack of feedback causes the highest level of dissatisfaction. Families appreciate being given the name and contact number of the member who will act as the Liaison Officer, so they can channel their questions to him/her. In the case where a card was provided, this proved to be extremely helpful.

Of the 11 focus group participants whose case had come to trial, all 11 chose to attend. Indeed, many families desired to attend every preliminary hearing as well. It was important for families to feel informed and part of the process, even if they were not called as witnesses. To this end, families expressed a wish to be informed by the Gardaí of *every* court hearing so that they could decide whether or not to attend. Families wished this information to be given to them without them having to constantly ask.

It is a recommendation that the Gardaí ask the family to nominate one person to act as a go-between. This person could act as the family's point of contact with the Gardaí. It is obviously difficult to contact each and every family member whenever there is something to report, so it would be helpful for the family to draw up an informal 'contact tree' whereby all family members contact each other when the Gardaí have contacted the go-between.

Families appreciate the Gardaí staying in touch, even when there is nothing to report.

In the case of a murder happening outside the country, due to the fact that people appear to look on the Gardaí as support givers and information providers, it would be courteous to call on the family. Information could be offered on Victim Support, and on the Department of Foreign Affairs, to whom all questions about procedures should be directed.

At the time of the court trial, families appreciate contact from the Gardaí. If protocol restricts contact with any family members immediately preceding or during the trial, this should be explained to the family in advance so they know why.

Graphic evidence will be presented at the trial. It will also be presented at the Coroner's Court. It is therefore unhelpful to withhold this evidence from families. Instead, it would be better to inform them that graphic evidence has been gathered and tell them that if any of them would like to know the details, that you will inform them. The decision to hear it or not to hear it should be the family's.

As anybody who gives a statement to the Gardaí is entitled to their own copy of that statement, it is important to provide witnesses with copies of their statement in advance of when they take the stand. Any witness, but most particularly a family member, feels extremely anxious before cross-examination, and familiarity with their statement could help to alleviate some anxiety.

It is a recommendation to inform families that the Gardai are duty-bound to divulge all information, if asked to do so in court. In one focus group discussion, one participant felt let down because she thought that certain information was confidential between herself and the investigating Garda.

It is distressing for families to be in close proximity with the offender during the trial. It would be helpful for the Gardaí to sit and stand between the two groups so that contact is kept to a minimum.

Families want to be informed of any appeals or early release of an offender. They would appreciate the Gardaí letting them know whenever such information is available.

Needs from the Media

Dissatisfaction abounded in relation to the media, but this mainly appeared to stem from the publishing of exaggerated or untruthful information. Some participants expressed displeasure that photographs were printed without permission.

Distress was caused in one case by an offender appearing in a play on television, which was broadcast from the prison. In such a case, there was a need for the family to be informed about any such broadcasts to alleviate the shock and distress.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to the media

Families have been caused a great deal of distress by what has been printed by the media. To this end, it is a recommendation that only factual information be produced by the printed media.

Permission should be sought from the family if the media wishes to run a photograph of the victim. Such permission should not be abused by running the victim's photograph repeatedly over time or reproducing it to link in with another murder in the future. This causes anguish to families, who are hampered in coping with the murder and moving on with their lives by being constantly reminded by photographs in the press.

At any time following the murder if a long news item or documentary will feature either the victim or the perpetrator, it would be courteous to inform the family that this will be taking place. Families understand that the press is, and should be, free to inform its readership on any topic. It is lack of courtesy and consideration for the bereaved that causes hardship and distress.

A distinct lack of knowledge about the workings of the Irish Criminal Justice System emerged from the focus group discussions. It would be

helpful if the media were able to play a role in educating the general public about the system. Lack of knowledge about criminal law led in many cases to confusion, dissatisfaction and disillusionment. Some prior information would assist any victim of crime with what to expect.

Needs from the Social Services

Many families, particularly those who had lost the main wage-earner, were in great need of assistance from the social services.

The needs came in the form of psychological services, special counselling for children, financial assistance and medical care.

Participants agreed that it would be helpful if information relating to these services was more widely available, or provided on an outreach basis.

It was felt that if someone is murdered, then social services should be offered free of charge.

It was also felt that the State should pay for the funeral and the headstone.

There was a perception that the offender was better looked after by the social services than the victim's family, and families felt that there was a need for better equality.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to the social services

Many families expressed dissatisfaction that the social services did not contact them after the murder. Many felt that some form of outreach contact would have been appropriate. Needs in this area came in the form of psychological services, special counselling for children, financial assistance and medical care.

The strongest need expressed by families of the social services was the need for child counselling. It transpired that a gap exists in the provision of child counselling services, with the need not being filled by any particular agency.

Several participants detailed behavioural difficulties that their children displayed following the murder. They felt that child counselling should be available immediately to children so that problems are nipped in the bud and not allowed to progress further. It was further suggested that the counselling should be offered in the home environment. Participants also felt that in the case of murder, such child counselling should be offered free of charge.

Following what emerged from the focus group discussions, it is a further recommendation that if a child has lost a parent through murder, it is appropriate for the statutory social bodies to make sure that the child lives in a safe and appropriate environment.

The effect of murder on the immediate family is such that medical care and psychological/ psychiatric services are often required. In the case where finances are tight, such assistance should be offered free of charge. Even in the case where a family may have some money available, such treatment is expensive and often long-term, causing a considerable financial drain. It is important that the financing of medical and psychological assistance to families of murder victims be reviewed with a view to making it easier for families to seek and receive help.

Due to the suddenness of murder, it creates a heavy financial burden for families. Families of victims themselves have recommended that funeral and burial expenses be covered by the State to alleviate some of the financial difficulty in the initial aftermath.

People bereaved by murder appreciate being given information and offered help. It would be appropriate following a murder that a representative from the local social welfare office and health board contact the family to see if they are eligible for any assistance. The shock of losing a loved one

through murder is such that it can often be difficult for families to seek this information out for themselves. As with any service user, it is important that their respect and dignity be upheld at all times.

Murder is a crime committed by a perpetrator against a victim. At the time of writing this thesis, the current rate of murders in Ireland was approximately 50 per year. Although more concentrated in Dublin, this figure is spread out all over the country. It should therefore not be impossible for any local statutory social service to carry out the above recommendations to a family in their area.

Needs from the Coroner's Court

Lack of information about the role of the coroner and the workings of the court led to a feeling of being left out.

Education and preparation for the court was needed to alleviate distress at hearing graphic evidence.

There was a desire for the family's bereavement and distress to be acknowledged by the coroner.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to the Coroner's Court

Proceedings at the Coroner's Court are often confusing to families. Many do not understand the role of the Coroner or what to expect at the court. To alleviate such confusion, two recommendations are proposed.

Firstly, that the Coroner's Court link in with Victim Support, with a view to providing court support to bereaved families. It is a recommendation that the Court facilitates the Victim Support volunteers and assists them with information that can be passed on to families.

Secondly, it is a recommendation that a booklet, similar to the one produced by the Dublin City Coroner's Office, be produced to inform people on the

role of the Coroner and the Court. If it would be difficult for each court in the country to produce such a booklet, perhaps a national one could be produced by the Coroners' Association.

It would be helpful if the Coroner's Court remembered the family and their distress, and was able to acknowledge them, either publicly or privately. It has often proved difficult for families to be able to hear the proceedings at court, so perhaps acoustics in some courtrooms need to be improved. The Coroner's Court is a public court, and all present have a right to see, hear and understand what is going on.

Where these conditions have been met, it has helped the family through the experience immensely.

Financial and Compensation Needs

Families who lost the main wage-earner were in dire need of financial assistance.

Even when it was not the main wage-earner who was murdered, funeral, medical and other bills were very expensive and many families had difficulty coping.

Many members of a family suffered expense, not only those who were to be compensated by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal.

It was agreed that the financial needs were worst during the first year or two following the murder.

Delays in compensation payment caused dissatisfaction to families. Many did not understand why the delays existed.

There was a need for assistance in filling out the compensation application form and gathering the required paperwork together.

There was a request for an interim payment to assist families while waiting for the main payment to be processed.

Where compensation was granted, the amount was seen to be inadequate in many cases.

Financial recommendations

None of the participants was aware of the existence of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal until well after the murder. Those who knew were informed by a third party, usually Victim Support. It is a recommendation that the Compensation Tribunal educate support agencies, statutory bodies and the Gardaí about the role of the Tribunal, how they can assist families of murder victims (or indeed any crime victim), and how to apply.

Financial needs were highest in the initial stages following the murder. However, it appeared to take some time for the application for compensation to be processed, causing some families extreme financial strain. It is a recommendation that a form of interim compensation be offered to assist with funeral, medical or other expenses immediately following the murder.

Delays in payment often appeared to families to be caused by red tape. If such delays are really necessary, it would be important to explain clearly the reasons why. Confusion and dissatisfaction arose over such delays and families did not appear to understand why the delays occurred.

Families who were compensated in the past did not feel that the amount of compensation was adequate for their needs. This report is aware that the compensation amount has been reviewed and increased in the last few years. However, it is a recommendation that payments are always adequate to cover families' financial needs, particularly when it is the main wage-earner who has been lost.

Finally, it is often the case that non-dependent family members sign a waiver, to ensure that more compensation money goes to the dependent family of the deceased. However, it has transpired that non-dependent family members sometimes pay for the funeral or other expenses, for which they are never compensated if a waiver has been signed. It is a recommendation that funeral and other similar bills are cleared separately to the main compensation payment.

Summary of Families of Murder Victims' Focus Groups

When a family member is murdered, severe and prolonged psychological effects can follow.

Initial reactions of shock and denial were discussed.

Many psychological effects could be divided into emotional, behavioural, cognitive and mental health effects. This echoes the results of the *Crime Impact Survey* and lends further support to the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig. 1.7).

Emotional reactions included fear, anger, sadness and loneliness.

General behavioural disturbances included not eating, staying up at night, having nightmares, constantly crying, sleep disturbances, behaving as though in shock and generally behaving out of character. Ritual behaviours were also described.

Cognitive effects manifested themselves in the way families viewed and came to terms with their situation. This gave rise to coping mechanisms, but these were varied and individual.

Mental health effects included suicidal feelings, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The psychological effects lend themselves to a wide variety of support needs. Support is needed not only in the short-term as the family strives to cope with the murder, but in the long term as psychological effects manifest themselves further. Children are extremely adversely affected by murder in the family, yet there appears to be few services in place to offer child support or counselling.

The nature of murder means that families are inevitably thrown in contact with many organisations and agencies. Needs were extracted and recommendations made in relation to Victim Support, the Gardai, the social

services, the media, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal and the Coroner.

Families have expressed distress at decisions being taken out of their hands in relation to things like viewing the body, attending the court trial, not being told about the extent of injuries etc. It is important to consider the family wherever possible.

Particularly in relation to the viewing of the body, it is important for the opportunity to exercise control to be facilitated. Families need to view the body to accept the reality of the death and to say goodbye. It is never helpful to discourage them from doing so, although a warning about the injuries, if severe, should be proffered.

A huge need for information emerged from the focus group discussions. For both organisations and individuals, it is helpful to offer information to families on support and services available to them. Support, information and education help to alleviate the feelings of helplessness and lack of control and helps families to feel more a part of the proceedings that consequently follow.

Needs Analysis Study

Section 5: Results of Burglary Victims' Focus Groups

The burglary victims' focus groups each lasted an hour and ten minutes.

Burglary Group 1 consisted of 4 participants.

Participant 1 (P1): Female victim, 40s age group.

Participant 2 (P2): Female victim, 30s age group.

Participant 3 (P3): Female victim, 40s age group.

Participant 4 (P4): Male victim, 30s age group.

Burglary Group II also consisted of 4 participants.

Participant 1 (P1): Male victim, 50s age group.

Participant 2 (P2): Female victim, 50s age group. Wife of P1.

Participant 3 (P3): Female victim, 50s age group.

Participant 4 (P4): Male victim, 20s age group.

Participants were arbitrarily assigned to the focus groups by the Gardaí and came from the residential areas surrounding Dun Laoghaire Garda Station, Co. Dublin including; Dun Laoghaire, Sandycove, Ballinteer, Glenageary and Kill o'the Grange. Due to this random assignment, it was again decided to describe their voiced needs in one single section. Where specific quotes are used, however, the participant and his/her group number have been identified.

Victims described the emotions and other psychological effects that followed the burglary.

- General psychological effects including initial reactions, gender-specific reactions, imagining worst-case scenarios.
- Emotional effects
- Behavioural effects
- Coping mechanisms
- Effects on children
- Support needs

In relation to practical needs, the following are areas where residential burglary victims voiced needs, dissatisfactions and/or shortcomings in service provision.

- Victim Support
- The Criminal Justice System, offenders and restorative justice
- The Gardaí
- Social services
- Financial needs, compensation and insurance
- Security and crime prevention needs

The data generated by burglary victims' focus groups appear as quotations in the following section. Further commentary and interpretation of the data can be found in Section 6 – Discussion and Recommendations.

Psychological Effects

General psychological effects of burglary

Initial reactions to burglary were discussed. Shock was a common reaction to discovering the burglary.

"I didn't expect to see what I saw. This guy coming down the stairs with his hood over his (head)…I got such a shock." (B1-P3)

"Well, I was actually out of the house and I just got a call from the nursing home next door to the house. And the staff just heard the alarm going off and they called me. And my reaction, when I heard it, was 'I don't believe you,' because my house was so well secured. (B1-P1)

One participant went into denial following her break-in.

"You feel that this kind of hasn't really happened. I'll just tidy it away. Like I didn't ring anybody either, it was my son who went out to a neighbour who in turn got in touch with my mother. My sister came down and I just sat there and cried. For three hours. All I could do was cry." (B1-P2)

Gender-specific reactions were also noted. Again following from the *Crime Impact Survey*, it is interesting to note the differences between male and female reactions to burglary. It has already been noted that the anger reactions were described by males. The fear reactions were described by females. Of course, it would be incorrect to generalise from two focus groups containing four participants each, but the following quotations further emphasise possible gender differences and remind one of the importance of looking at effects of crime in light of the victim's gender.

A male participant was honest enough to say he felt helpless after the burglary, a feeling that for him was unusual.

"(I felt) a bit helpless, which isn't something I'd normally feel." (B1-P4)

The same participant also described his reluctance in seeking support.

"And I'd say, if it wasn't for having those friends, I wouldn't have rung anybody because it wouldn't have struck me to ring anybody. And it probably would have made me feel kind of weak or something." (B1-P4)

Perhaps his reluctance to seek support was related to his invulnerable view of self.

"I'm young and fit and don't generally feel vulnerable, but I can imagine an older person in a home would feel vulnerable whether they had a burglary or not."

Another male participant described the female members of his family as being affected by the burglary, but himself not at all.

"Personally, it didn't shock me. My wife would have been affected and my daughter was the most traumatised...As I say, I wasn't traumatised myself." (B2-P1)

Some participants imagined worst-case scenarios, or what *could* have happened.

"Now, after that episode I really did get a terrible fright. I was thinking about all sorts of things, what could have happened...But it was a very frightening experience at that stage, thinking of my babies and all the rest. Thinking of what could have happened, this is what you think, the feelings afterwards, you know? You could be stabbed, you could be raped, you know? I mean, something could have happened to the babies, or whatever, if he actually saw them." (B1-P3)

"They may have come down through the trap door from the attic...that's the only way it could have happened. So, maybe they were about to gag me, this is my...you know, I'm sensationalising it now." (B1-P1)

"The way I looked at it, it could have been so much worse. I could have been there on my own, they could have killed the poor old dog, they could have done God knows what to myself, you know that kind of way?" (B2-P2)

Emotional effects

In general, emotional effects were of fear, anger, upset, frustration and resentment.

"But my reaction to the whole thing, I was very resentful afterwards as well because they had taken everything. Everything that I had built up over the years as regards jewellery and that. And there was a lot of sentimental stuff there. And I just felt, if they were drug users, that I hope they do themselves a lot of damage. Now, that only lasted about two weeks, that resentfulness, and that kind of went and I just said, 'Well, just get on with it.'

"This was the first time that I was broken into and the shock of it was terrible. Indescribable. If I was broken into again, I think I'd go cracked!" (B1-P2)

"You really feel like you're a victim in your own house. And what do you do? You still have to live in the place...I feel I cannot live in my own house that I'm entitled to because you don't know what is going to happen...So, you just can't live without being afraid...The next thing, I'll be mugged in the driveway or something...you're literally looking over your shoulder the whole time." (B1-P1)

"My sister came down and I just sat there and cried. For three hours. All I could do was cry... I just sat there crying, like a big wally, like I felt terrible bad the next day, but I kind of felt if I didn't cry the way I did, I probably would have held it in and it probably would have been worse. But I think it was just the shock, really. And I didn't feel safe, especially in my own bedroom, cause that's where most of the damage was. And the total disregard they had for your stuff. My son is an asthmatic, and he had his nebuliser which he would use two or three times a day. And they're quite expensive, but no good to them, no good to sell, nobody wants it. I think it was just taken out of the press and just flung across the room. That really upset me...The total disregard. Plus, my mother, it was coming up to her 80th birthday and I'd just finished paying off a diamond and emerald ring. Since Christmas I'd been paying this and I'd brought it home, it was still in the box, and that was taken as well. Now, that upset me as well, because it had never even been worn. Just stuff that wouldn't bother anybody else, that type of thing." (B1-P2)

One participant described herself as feeling disappointed with the offender, whom she knew from the past.

"An awful lot of my former art "students", supposedly, actually graduated to Mountjoy when they matured. And I have a very strong suspicion that my burglary was one of my former art students...So, it was mainly disappointment, it wasn't losing anything valuable...it's really disappointment and stuff...it's a sort of kick in the teeth, all this, I'd been trying to discover some artistic talent with them. That was the upsetting part for me." (B2-P3)

It is interesting to note that one female participant stated at first that she was not affected by the burglary.

"I feel like I'm not going to be of much assistance because...it didn't have any effect on me...I was actually away when the whole thing happened...I don't think I was affected." (B2-P2)

However, the same participant went on to describe how affected she was!

"When I initially got the phone call, and it was confirmed yes, the house was burgled, I started to bawl. I was very upset about my mother's jewellery...when I found the jewellery had gone, all I could say was, 'God, (my nieces) will have nothing belonging to Granny,' and my sister would have nothing.

As I say, it did affect me insofar as I know everything was messed, but I knew that could be sorted, there was nothing dirtied...because had that happened, no way would I have gone back into the house.

I met some of the neighbours just before Christmas, and they're actually aware of somebody who does burgle houses in the neighbourhood on a regular basis. And he's in and out of gaol, and no sooner is he out of gaol than he's in again...Now when I'm thinking about it, that preyed on my mind afterwards when I had gone away." (B2-P2)

In addition, this participant described behavioural effects, detailed below in the relevant section.

Fear was a major effect for most people. Immediately following the burglary, many participants were fearful. One was particularly afraid that the burglar might try and come back the following night.

"The following day, the house was in a mess, I had to get up and clean the house and certainly, there was a gun safe in the house and they tried to get that open. And that night I was concerned, any time I heard noises I was wondering were they going to try and come back to try and crack the safe?...Not that they would have got anything out of the safe because there was nothing in it, but I was quite nervous." (B1-P4)

"I really got a terrible fright altogether. I had babies at the time...And I heard the door closing and I just shouted out, 'Who's that?' So, I heard them scurrying down the stairs. Now, after that episode, I really did get a terrible fright...and I actually got very sick afterwards, you know? I feel it was a result of the fright I got." (B1-P3)

"I was very nervous after (the burglary)...I was certainly relieved when I heard (the offender) had gone back to England." (B2-P3)

Even now, the fact that I have doubly secured the house, they're going to find another way around that...So, you just can't live without being afraid." (B1-P1)

Fear was mentioned several times by many participants. Only one said she did not actually feel fearful after the burglary. She was a single lady living alone.

"No, I'm not that kind of person. You know, it wouldn't frighten me, now...I wouldn't have worries about staying in the house on my own. That wouldn't have been my worry at all. Funny, it was my sister said to me, 'Are you all right about going home?' I says, 'Oh yeah, sure I'm used to being on my own." (B2-P2)

"(I thought) Is this going to happen again? Will they come back? Or are they going to come back and maybe...hurt one of the kids. All kinds of things go through your head." (B1-P2)

Some participants mentioned feeling helpless.

"...I was quite resentful and mad. And a bit helpless, which isn't something I'd normally feel." (B1-P4)

One mentioned a loss of control.

"And you're not in control of the situation. And you know at the end of the day, when you want to go home to your own home, you just felt exposed. You might as well be sitting in the middle of O'Connell Street. That's how I felt...It lasted for about a month." (B1-P2)

Anger was also mentioned, although it was male participants who said they felt angry.

"For a while afterwards, I was quite resentful and mad. And then I felt maybe I should have gone in, I should have tackled them. One the one hand, I knew it would have been crazy to do it, but on the other hand, some of me wanted to go in and have a go at them anyway." (B1-P4)

"I was very annoyed and quite angry, but beyond that there was nothing really. We were very annoyed with what had happened." (B2-P4)

Behavioural effects

It was explored in the *Crime Impact Survey* that some victims express the effects of crime behaviourally. It was interesting to note that behavioural effects came up unprompted in both burglary focus groups.

Hypervigilance to security measures and behavioural changes were mentioned most frequently.

"But I must say, it's probably without realising it, that it has had an effect on me in that I'm listening when I'm going to bed. I mean, I've been up and down to that attic so many times, watching. But in the interim, I've had to put in a whole new (alarm) system, so I've beams all through my attic." (B1-P1)

"Before, if I had been going to bed and I heard a bang, I would have just got into bed and not thought twice about it. Whereas now, I would be

conscious and I'd put the alarm on. And even plenty of times, I've gone to bed and heard something and I get up and put the alarm on again." (B1-P4)

"I threw out everything that was on the floor, and I went round with Domestos. Yes. Door handles and everything, absolutely." (B1-P1)

"I find in an indirect way, really, I know I've heard this before but I find I am becoming a kind of a victim of what has happened. Because every morning when I go out, I make sure that everything is locked up, so I'm really locking myself in from the outside world." (B2-P2)

This was the participant who stated at the beginning of the discussion that the burglary didn't have any effect on her!

Cognitive effects

Cognitive effects were displayed in respondents' views about the various voluntary, social and statutory bodies they encountered. These are described in detail, agency by agency, later in the chapter.

The way an individual copes with burglary can also be seen as a cognitive effect, insofar as their world view is invoked or re-shaped to give meaning to what has happened. Coping mechanisms are described below.

Coping mechanisms

Participants spoke about how they coped after the burglary. The fact that a total of eight participants mentioned what could be viewed as four separate coping mechanisms, shows the wide range of coping strategies that crime victims may engage.

It was interesting to note that four separate coping strategies were described over the course of the discussions. I have called these:

1. "It could have been worse."
2. "Look on the bright side."

3. "Denial."
4. "Self-blame."

"It could have been worse" is a downward comparison technique, where the victim compares him/herself to a more unlucky person, or thinks of worse case scenarios, in an effort to produce a belief that they are, in fact, lucky to have escaped so lightly (Winkel et al, 1999)

Examples of "It could have been worse" came up when discussing the fear reaction.

"I suppose it's one way of looking at it, that there was nobody hurt, nobody assaulted." (B1-P2)

"I think that's what everybody says." (B1-P1, agreeing)

"You have to take that out of it." (B1-P2, agreeing further)

"The way I looked at it, it could have been so much worse. I could have been there on my own, they could have killed the poor old dog, they could have done God knows what to myself, you know that kind of way? The fact that I am on my own, you know, all I could say was, 'God, I was lucky.' Thank God, you know?" (B2-P2)

"It's a huge thing, but then, we got off lightly. We were only...you could call ours a skirmish, it wasn't really a major thing." (B2-P1)

"I can look back and say I was lucky the place wasn't messed completely, not everything was gone, I wasn't there." (B2-P2)

"I think from listening to everybody, we were all reasonably lucky, as far as you're talking to people who had a minor experience." (B2-P1)

"It could have been so much worse." (B2-P2)

"Look on the bright side" is a way of seeking something positive out of the experience.

A good example was:

"We did all learn from it, and everybody has tightened up and there's better window control. And it has alerted everybody to the fact that we were quite complacent. I suppose we felt we were in a little enclave close to the Garda station and we were invulnerable." (B2-P1)

Self-blame can sometimes be employed as a coping mechanism. Feeling that one contributed to the crime through one's own actions can help somebody regain control over what has happened (Fattah, 1997).

"In our situation it happened early in the evening. I think we contributed to the problem by having the windows open. The guy that came in obviously sussed the place and saw the opportunity...So, you know, we were negligent from a high security point of view. But we wouldn't be again, you know? So it would have smartened us up in that respect." (B2-P1)

This participant has coped with the burglary by attributing his own actions to part of the cause. Therefore, his argument goes, if I am more vigilant about security in the future, and learn my lesson from this experience, burglary can be averted in the future. Furthermore, this participant can use such a self-blame strategy to re-assert control over the situation. He contributed to the burglary; therefore it was not an event that happened entirely out of his control.

Denial can also be viewed as a coping mechanism. Denial, however, is usually only employed in the very early stages of hearing bad news.

Indeed, where participants described denial, it was immediately when they heard the news.

"Well, I was actually out of the house and I just got a call from the nursing home next door to the house. And the staff just heard the alarm going off and they called me. And my reaction, when I heard it, was 'I don't believe you,' because my house was so well secured. (B1-P1)

"You feel that this kind of hasn't really happened. I'll just tidy it away." (B1-P2)

Effects of burglary on children

The children in the household also seemed to be somewhat affected by the break-in. In one case, the whole family was affected.

"But I found, a couple of days later, you have to get on with it. Just forget about it. Because I found with the young kids, the youngest lad wouldn't sleep. I had terrible trouble with him for about a week, trying to sleep. And my daughter was very upset and I was very nervous...So, it did have a terrible effect on me, but I just had to get on with it, for the kids' sake. Because if they see you all down, they're going to start fretting again. But especially my youngest lad, he was very upset, now, really really upset." (B1-P2)

"My daughter was very upset and I was very nervous..." (B1-P2)

Support needs

Regardless of how the burglary had affected them, nobody in either group went looking for support.

"I wouldn't have rung anybody because it wouldn't have struck me to ring anybody. And it probably would have made me feel kind of weak, or something." (B1-P4)

"I didn't ask for any (support). I suppose I felt the girls next door were there...So, you know, you just had to get on with it." (B1-P1)
"You relied on people around you?" (Facilitator)
"Just people around me." (B1-P1)

It appeared that although nobody sought out support, the support that they did receive from others was well received.
"I suppose in one respect I'm used to being on my own so I don't really look for any help from anybody, if you know what I mean...I wouldn't go looking for pity or anything. But anyone who knew me, I told them and they said gosh, it was terrible, you know. People would sympathise with you." (B2-P2)

A participant in his twenties felt that he and his wife adequately supported each other.
"I didn't look for any (support). I don't think we really needed any. I think between ourselves we were all right." (B2-P4)

Any support that was received after the burglary came from family and friends. In this way, family and friends became the primary support providers. Neighbours were also mentioned frequently.

"We have a nice little community, we did tell everybody and they all rallied round." (B2-P1)

A repeat burglary victim described a previous burglary. She had young children at the time, but only received support from her next-door neighbour.
"The only support I got was from my next-door neighbour who was very, very good to me at the time. I had three very young children...and I just had my next-door neighbour who was very kind to me, and called into me at

night-time if my husband was going out, or whatever. And she was great. And that's the only support I had.

If you were a person on your own, with no family or friends around you, definitely it would be great to have somebody to go to and share your experience with. Somebody to talk to, basically. That's just what you need, you know, at the time. You just need somebody there for you. Just to be there and to let you talk, really. Somebody to listen to you. That's what you need." (B1-P3)

Following a more recent burglary, her family were grown up and were able to offer her more support.

"I didn't actually feel at this stage that I needed any (support). I suppose I had my family who are adults now...And I suppose that helped a lot." (B1-P3)

She guessed that she needed less support second time around because she had no young children to worry about.

"This time I think it was the fact that I hadn't any young children and there was nobody involved in it this time. There was nobody in the house, maybe." (B1-P3)

"Except yourself!" (Facilitator)

"Yeah, that's true, but it didn't have the same effect on me this time. I don't know why." (B1-P3)

Later in the discussion, the same participant said it was because the burglar didn't get away with any of her possessions.

"He didn't get anything out of the house, he got absolutely nothing. So, that's probably one of the main reasons I didn't feel too bad about it. The fact that he got into the house, all right, but he had to leave everything behind because I disturbed him. And that's why I was okay about it really, you know?" (B1-P3)

Practical needs

Victim Support

Some participants were not aware that there was a service for burglary victims.

"I would have known (about Victim Support), but I wouldn't have related it to somebody who had a break-in. I thought it was for somebody who was assaulted, or you know, a more personal thing rather than a break-in. I certainly wouldn't have (contacted them)." (B1-P1)

Another participant would not have contacted them anyway.

"And you, P2, did you know about Victim Support? Would you have contacted them if you'd known?" (Facilitator)

"Probably at the time, no." (B1-P2)

"Any particular reason?" (Facilitator)

"Probably because I wouldn't have wanted to talk about it." (B1-P2)

One victim of repeat victimisation said that when she was badly affected after an earlier burglary she would have needed Victim Support, but did not need them after the last one.

"This time, the more recent time, I don't think I would have needed it because I didn't feel too bad. I was okay about it really, I didn't feel like I needed that extra (support). Like I did on the previous occasion. I would have then, all right.

If you were a person on your own, with no family or friends around you, definitely it would be great to have somebody to go to and share your experience with. Somebody to talk to, basically. That's just what you need, you know, at the time. You just need somebody there for you. Just to be there and to let you talk, really. Somebody to listen to you. That's what you need." (B1-P3)

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"I think that if somebody like (Victim Support) were available to talk to my daughter, I think that would have been helpful...I think that the effects of it are still with her...And perhaps my wife, I went a bit light on her reaction to it.

If there were somebody, a social worker or somebody like (Victim Support), with experience like that, to come along and deal with it, and to take my daughter through it and my wife." (B2-P1)

Only one participant had had contact with Victim Support following the burglary. She appreciated the support but would have preferred it to have been offered earlier.

"(The support) came rather late, it came some time afterwards...It was a long time, the message getting through to Victim Support to come round...I bumped into the (offender) twice in the meanwhile, in the street. The cheekiest devil. "Hello P3, how's the art coming along?!" (B2-P3)

"So if (the support) had happened earlier, if contact had been made earlier, it would have been better. Is that what you're saying?" (Facilitator)

"I might have known what to say to that chap, things like that...I guess I needed some advice on how to cope with it." (B2-P3)

The Criminal Justice System

Participants were asked for their views on the criminal justice system, and asked if they had any particular needs or issues to share.

Some seemed to feel helpless.

"It's almost like it's happening every day...It's the revolving door situation." (B1-P1)

"Do you feel, as a victim of crime, that you have been treated fairly by the system?" (Facilitator)

"Well, I haven't really thought about it, but I wouldn't say so. No, definitely not. I feel, I suppose, the way most people feel, that there's nothing you can do, or that anybody can do." (B1-P3)

When asked about her treatment within the criminal justice system, another participant replied

"I feel I cannot live in my own house that I'm entitled to because you don't know what is going to happen. Although I felt I had myself absolutely protected with having my alarm on at night, and having quite a sophisticated alarm, that they still got in. So, you just can't live without being afraid. Even now, the fact that I have doubly secured the house, they're going to find another way around that. The next thing, I'll be mugged in the driveway or something...you're literally looking over your shoulder the whole time." (B1-P1)

When speaking about offenders, participants were sometimes quite punitive in attitude.

"I would just love to see the person who did it, and literally, Chinese torture...If we had a much more strict criminal justice, we might not have half the problem. Or make an example of somebody so that it puts fear into them. These guys have no fear, it's a revolving door, they're put into prison for a couple of years, sometimes a couple of months, and they're out again doing the same thing." (B1-P1)

The issue of illegal drug use came up several times over the course of the discussions. Clearly, many burglary victims saw drug abuse as being a major cause of crime as well as having a negative impact on society.

"That's what I would love to know – has anybody any suggestion where we can put these guys? I mean, it is the anger that you feel, you know,

somebody coming in and invading your privacy and taking anything that you have, and they're out there going high on your money." (B1-P1)

"As regards the guys that done (the burglary), I assume they are drug addicts, most of them are. And you mentioned there about a deprived childhood, well that used to wash with me. It doesn't any more, because as you go through life you realise how hard it is. We could all turn out to be drug addicts, we could all go on the booze if we wanted to, but you just have to get on with it. That'd be my attitude. Now, there would be a certain amount that are weak and give into it, but a lot of these guys try it for kicks and then they get hooked...Make them feel what it's like to have somebody come into their home, or their mother's home, let them see what it's like to feel that way." (B1-P2)

"I know people that are drug addicts that came from the exact same background as me, so the deprived background thing doesn't wash with me at all...It seems like they get to a stage that they become junkies and they can do what they want. And they have to do it to get what they need. But they're doing what they want, they make the choice, they are the people who make the choice to be a junkie. And they, by the same token, can make the choice not to be a junkie. Okay, it's not easy, but they can make the choice...You know, the stuff is illegal and it shouldn't be done, and if you *do* do it, you break the law and you pay the consequences. But, I wouldn't have great sympathy at all." (B1-P4)

In each focus group, a participant compared the criminal justice system in Ireland with one in a stricter foreign country. One described how offenders are dealt with in Saudi Arabia and the other one mentioned Singapore. Both participants seemed to feel that a more punitive justice system would be more of a deterrent to potential offenders.

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"...In Singapore, my wife could leave her handbag on the seat...leave it on the public thoroughfare and the handbag would be there when she got back. Because if anybody took it, they'd cut their hand off. Now, that's a deterrent. But you might say that's cruel...We have loads of rules but we don't apply them...You see yellow lines and everybody parked on them. So, we've a funny attitude to law in this country. A very relaxed attitude...we have an adjustment to make, to start being people that are conscious of the laws and being a legalistically minded society." (B2-P1)

Another seemed to feel sympathy for offenders.

"Yeah, well, what to do with them, I don't really know. Putting them away is one thing but I'd say they're probably victims themselves in one way or another. Possibly in their childhood or family problems, or whatever, you know?" (B1-P3)

One participant said that she would like to see intervention in the early stages of criminal behaviour.

"Okay, they have a problem, there's somebody feeding their problem, but how did they get to that in the first place? I mean, that's where we should be starting. You know, with these people. We can talk about how they come from deprived areas and all that, but there's something more, I think, that can be done at that stage, than allowing them to get to this." (B1-P1)

Participants were asked what alternatives could be provided to prison sentences. Educating the offender in the effects of crime on the victim was one suggestion.

"I think the effect that (would deter offenders most)...make them feel what it's like to have somebody come into their home, or their mother's home, let them see what it's like to feel that way." (B1-P2)

The researcher asked if victim-offender mediation would be a good way to educate an offender. The groups in general did not really seem to take to the idea.

"I wouldn't like to meet the intruder, you know, I definitely would not. No way." (B1-P3)

"Now, I personally wouldn't like that. I most definitely wouldn't like to meet somebody, knowing they're a burglar. No. I don't know why, now, just when you say it, that would be my immediate reaction. I mean, I'm quite content, if you could use those words, in saying, 'Well, right. I was burgled, nothing happened to me.' But I would definitely hate to be sitting in a room now, and knowing that you were the burglar." (B2-P2)

"I don't know if sending them to prison works very well. As I said, the guy that done us was out on probation...What happens when you send them to prison? Is there anything being done to try and rehabilitate them?" (B2-P4)

The Gardaí

Most participants were pleased with the service they received from the Gardaí, and did not voice many needs or shortages in service provision.

"I found they were down quite quick. The next day they called to see how things were, and I thought that was very nice." (B1-P1)

"They came round in the car, they were pretty quick in getting around, it only took 2 or 3 minutes. They were really good, they came, I was trying to get in the house and they were like, 'Oh no, let us go in.' And they came in, and the (offenders) were gone." (B1-P4)

A couple of participants were disappointed with the length of time it took for the Gardaí to respond to their call.

"I would have liked for the Gardaí to come around immediately afterwards, because maybe if they had come around immediately they would have got him.

I expected them to come within...five or ten minutes, because I'm only a very short distance from the Garda Station. But in actual fact it must have been hours, two/three hours later...I had to ring them again, actually. I don't know why. I think they were particularly busy that night, and there was a shortage. I think they only had one or two patrol cars. I think that was the reason for that, but I expected for them to be around within 10 minutes.

I was a bit disappointed that night that they didn't come earlier. More important things to do." (B1-P3)

"(The girls next door) had to call three times before anybody came and it was about 15 or 20 minutes and I thought that was long...But you know, having said all that, on three occasions before, I've had to call the guards because of people sitting on my door, or because I've sensor lights all around the house, heard people in around the house, and they have been up within...seconds. So, they were fantastic." (B1-P1)

The same participant didn't understand why her house could not have been fingerprinted the same evening of the burglary,

"When they talked about somebody coming to do fingerprints, they said, 'Okay, we won't have anybody up today, it'll be tomorrow.' But then one of the girls said, 'No, you must have somebody.' She was emphatic that the place was fingerprinted so that when I came in, at least I could get on with cleaning up the place. But absolutely nothing, and I really found that just awful because I was just another number out there, so it was almost like it's happening every day." (B1-P1)

Another didn't understand why the Gardaí did not question a witness.

"There was one gentleman who saw the actual culprit and saw him come out...The police came over with the forensics to check the place out, but they guy had gloves on so they didn't get anything. I thought it was quite slack that the police didn't interview the witness who saw the guy." (B2-P1)

This led the participant to believe that his case was not a priority for the Gardaí, thus creating dissatisfaction.

"I honestly got the impression that it's not a high priority on their list of priorities, that they probably have a lot more serious stuff to be dealing with...So, I would say that openly to the police. That's the impression I got – they didn't interview somebody who could have identified the culprit. I think that's slack...So in that respect, I could say that I'm a bit disappointed." (B2-P1)

Some participants felt they had a lack of knowledge about how the investigation into the burglary was going.

"I wasn't told...You see, like you say, I don't know. Maybe he was caught but I don't think so...It would be nice to know." (B1-P3)

"For this particular situation, I felt very let down in the sense that I have not to this day had any contact to say this person has been taken in, or is in prison, or whatever. And that is one of the things I would have loved to have known. Have they found (the offender)?" (B1-P1)

"Would you have liked follow-up, or more contact?" (Facilitator)

"Just maybe if the fingerprints hadn't have come through, you know, if there was no results from the fingerprinting, I would have liked to have been told. Either positive or negative." (B2-P3)

"After the fingerprints we didn't hear anything, but somebody came round, I think it was the following week, about 4 or 5 days later or something, to

say that the guy had been caught for it. But it would have been nice to know what happened after that. Because there wasn't any follow-up, I wasn't told if he was going to court...He was actually out on probation, they told us, so he was going back. But it would have been nice to know...I think it would be good if you knew how things were...if things were developing or what was happening." (B2-P4)

However, this was not true in every case. One male participant felt that if the offender had not been caught, there wouldn't be much point in the Gardaí contacting him back.

"...the guards haven't a hope of catching them, so they can't really ring me and tell me, 'We haven't caught them.' That's not going to cheer me up!" (B1-P4)

Another woman realised it would be nearly impossible for the Gardaí to trace the offenders, so she was not dissatisfied about hearing nothing further from them.

"I never heard anything about it, but to be honest with you, I wouldn't expect them to do anything about the burglary because I believe over the Christmas there was supposed to be 19 other houses in the locality broken into. This is what I heard afterwards. So I mean, in that respect all I can say is that the (guard) came to me, she was extremely nice, and I thought she did as much as she could in the circumstances. Because, I mean, I couldn't help her and there wasn't really anything she could do for me. And what was there, she took...As far as I could see she did everything she could do. And I wouldn't have expected any assistance or help afterwards...anything that was done I was quite satisfied with." (B2-P2)

One woman found it difficult to trace the Garda who was dealing with her case.

"The one thing that really worried me afterwards was that I came down here to the station on four occasions...There were four people that arrived at the house and I was trying to identify them. You know, one person who I could speak to, to say, "Look, what has happened, have you got any leads?" Or anything like that. I was told, "You'd better talk to this person." Then when I came, was given an appointment and came down, this person was away, off for the week. "Come back on Monday. Come back down the following Monday." And now, here we are two weeks later. I came back down the following Monday and was told this person was out, and would call round to the house, so the appointment was to call to the house at 8 o'clock. And I was sitting there waiting, so I get a phone call about a quarter past eight and the guard was saying to me, "What time did your burglary take place? And what day?" So, when I said the day, he said, "Oh, well I wasn't on duty." So, I was told then to call the Sergeant, and the Sergeant was going to be on at 10 o'clock. So, I contacted him and he said to me he'd try and find out. So at the end of all this, I found it was the squad from K- that were actually circling the area and they were the ones who were told. So, literally two weeks later, I got the name of the guard. And I found that really frustrating." (B1-P1)

"It just sounds from what you're saying that what you would really have liked at the time was to have one name that you could actually identify." (Facilitator)

"And just to keep in contact, to see how much they've progressed. Or even if they could say, maybe some of my jewellery was found...But nothing." (B1-P1)

In the cases where somebody did have a name to contact, the process was made much easier.

"The (guard) gave me a card with his name on it, and explained I could phone K- station. 'Here's a number if you need to contact me.' He also

went through, they went around and they said, 'Look, someone from forensics will come tomorrow.'

I didn't actually end up contacting anyone, but then even simple things like claiming insurance, at least when they say, 'Did you report it?' I was able to write down, 'Yes, I reported it to this guard, and here's his telephone number.' " (B1-P4)

"...the police, they came down very quickly, it was 10 or 15 minutes. I thought that was quick...And the next day I rang them because I found more stuff missing, and I actually did get a name of a policeman all right, and I was able to ring him and actually talk to him...He was really helpful." (B1-P2)

This participant also appreciated follow up contact the next day, but wished that the contact could have been maintained a bit longer, to keep her informed about the case.

"The forensic guy came down the next day, and then the police that I spoke to the previous night came down the next evening at half past six, just to see how things were.

In the real world, I know they're not going to get back to me because, like that, it happens every day. But I would love to know if they were caught." (B1-P2)

The same participant described how the Gardaí told her pretty much from the outset that she had little chance of getting her belongings back. The researcher enquired if this information was helpful for a burglary victim to hear, and the participant replied that, in her case, it was.

"What about the other information you were given about the value of your stuff, what it would be sold for, that it might be on its way to England? Was that information helpful?" (Researcher)

"Well, I think it was, in so far as I could get rid of my hopes that I had of getting it back. That was a definite." (B1-P2)

"It was realistic, then." (Researcher)

"Just to get on with it here and now." (B1-P2)

The social services

As with the families of murder victims, it had to be explained to both focus groups exactly what the social services were, before participants could voice any needs or make any suggestions. However, in general, people were not in receipt of any social welfare of health board benefits, were not in regular contact with the social services and did not feel they had many needs from statutory agencies.

"It would be the Community Welfare Officer who deals with that. But, I mean, as regards myself, nobody contacted me and I didn't go looking for assistance, although there was money taken. But had I not got a penny, I wouldn't have gone looking for help. But nobody came near me either way...They don't really go into things like that. But I mean, if it was money you needed, it'd be to the Community Welfare Officer." (B2-P2)

"Well, that'd be an approach from you to them, rather than the other way round." (B2-P1)

A few participants, while feeling that the social services were not really needed in their case, imagined that elderly or more vulnerable people might appreciate assistance.

"It depends on the circumstances, I'd say, really. If there's an elderly person, say, and their cash was taken, yeah." (B1-P3)

"Compensation for widows or somebody who is on Social Welfare. Not so much unemployment benefit but I'm talking about elderly people on pensions and that." (B1-P1)

One participant suggested that social services could help vulnerable people with security.

"Just since it happened to me, I'm young and fit and don't generally feel vulnerable, but I can imagine an older person in a home would feel vulnerable whether they had a burglary or not. And I know that I feel a lot safer with the alarm system, and old people, if they're not in a position to afford it...you know, why wait till they're burgled? Give it to them." (B1-P4)

This group was reminded that the Department of Social Welfare currently has a scheme that assists elderly people with security. One participant felt that information about the scheme might be lacking.

"They probably don't know about it. That's another thing." (B1-P2)

Financial and compensation needs

One participant could not claim insurance for his flat mate because he had not named him on the insurance policy.

"I just discovered that a friend, the guy who shares the house with me, he wasn't insured because I didn't name him on the insurance policy. Which was a bit maddening. Some of his stuff was more damaged. But because he wasn't named on the insurance policy, I can't claim for any of that. So he loses out." (B1-P4)

"The time before, I was burgled, jewellery was taken. I did claim but the insurance company was treating me as if I was cheating them and they took a long time to assess (the loss)." (B2-P3)

Most felt that statutory compensation would help in cases where insurance did not cover the loss, but this assistance at present is not available in the Republic of Ireland.

Security and crime prevention needs

Following the burglary, many people took measures to increase their safety and security.

"Since the break-in, I had the front of the house double-glazed but the back of the house wasn't. So, I just felt for security reasons, I had to go ahead with this, to get the windows in." (B1-P2)

"I've had to put in a whole new alarm system, so I've beams all through my attic." (B1-P1)

It appeared that several participants went looking for information relating to security.

"One thing I did make enquiries about afterwards was we don't have an alarm...I did ask someone to come and advise me on a burglary alarm and they haven't done to date. That's kind of technical stuff that I wouldn't have a clue of, that I would have liked. Now, I mentioned to the Garda then as well. He said, 'Well, somebody will, that can be arranged.' But I don't know. I said it, but that was it." (B2-P2)

It appeared that there could be a practical need relating to security measures that was not being met by any particular agency.

Needs Analysis Study

Section 6: Discussion and Recommendations of the Burglary Victims' Focus Groups

The victims of residential burglary expressed many needs, issues and observations that they had experienced since the crime occurred. As their needs were vocalised, the participants also expressed a wide range of psychological reactions and effects. Where needs or psychological reactions could or ought to be alleviated by particular agencies, recommendations are made accordingly.

Psychological effects of burglary

Immediate reactions to burglary were described as ones of shock, denial and fear.

It seemed that, in their own respective ways, everybody was affected by the burglary. One female participant first stated that she was not affected by the burglary, but her own descriptions later in the discussion showed that she had really been affected after all.

Gender-biased reactions became apparent. Male participants tended to mention anger more than female participants, and sometimes appeared to play down the effect that the burglary had had on them. Males also appeared more reluctant to receive support than females.

Longer-term reactions could be separated into emotional, behavioural and cognitive effects. Mental health effects were not mentioned in the burglary groups.

Emotional effects included fear, anger, upset, frustration, helplessness and resentment about what was taken. Loss of control was also mentioned.

Behavioural effects manifested themselves in hyper-vigilance to security measures, the need to scour the premises clean, and a need to lock themselves away from outsiders when at home.

Cognitive effects included views and opinions on the various agencies that were described in detail during the study.

Two participants with children described how the burglary had had an effect on them.

Coping mechanisms

Several "off-the-cuff" remarks showed four distinct coping mechanisms that these focus group participants employed to deal with the burglary:

a) "It could have been worse", where downward comparison techniques are used to compare self with others less fortunate, or to imagine worse case scenarios in an effort to feel lucky they escaped so lightly.

b) "Look on the bright side" where a lesson is learnt or a positive outcome reached so that good can be extracted from the experience.

c) Self-blame, where the victim blames or partly-blames own actions in an effort to regain a sense of control over events.

d) Denial, which is used in the initial stages of learning about the burglary.

"It could have been worse", "Look on the bright side", and "Self-blame" are all ways of looking at one's situation. In this way, they can also be seen as cognitive effects of crime.

Victims' coping mechanisms are further discussed later in the chapter.

Support needs

Nobody in either residential burglary group sought out support for themselves, finding primary support from family, neighbours and friends. The support that was received from these primary support providers was appreciated.

However, despite the fact that support was not actively sought out, one participant did recall a need for support following one particularly distressing burglary. She felt that her need for support may have been due to the fact that she had young children at the time. Not only were they

unable to offer her support, but it appeared to increase her levels of worry following the burglary.

As far as Victim Support or relevant support agencies were concerned, only one participant had received contact from Victim Support.

A couple of others said that they would have appreciated contact.

One male participant said that at the time, he probably wouldn't have wanted to talk about the burglary.

The participant who had received contact from Victim Support appreciated the support, but felt that it came rather late after the burglary.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to support needs

Most participants received informal support in the form of friends, family and neighbours. In general, when summing up the support needs and experiences of the burglary victims, one could say that such support was well received and sometimes really needed.

Some burglaries were more distressing to the victims than others. It appeared from victims' comments that support needs may be due to circumstances or low levels of available support. A woman with young children described a need for support, and this may be due to the fact that her children were young and she had less levels of adult support or it may be due to the fact that she was more fearful after the burglary because she feared for her babies.

It is thus a recommendation that a support agency, such as Victim Support, offers support to <u>all</u> victims of burglary. It is possible that some victims may decline the offer of support, but it would be important to offer support just in case a victim really is badly affected.

The Victim Support service that currently exists to support victims of residential burglary is on an outreach basis. In the one case where such

support was received, it was appreciated. One recalls the outcome of the *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey*, which showed that whilst the majority of victims felt that the support offered was needed and appreciated, not every victim was either badly affected or in need of support. However, the importance of offering an outreach support service cannot be denied, and the results of the needs analysis further verify its importance.

Most participants in the focus groups were either unaware of the Victim Support service or did not realise that the service extended beyond victims of serious injury and would have been available to them. The focus group discussions took place in an area where a long-standing branch of Victim Support exists, so perhaps the organisation needs to look at publicity on at least a local level, to ensure that local people are aware of the service.

In the one case where a participant did receive support from Victim Support, the support came some time after the burglary, and was too late to assist her with her main concern – what to do when meeting the offender in the future. If support is to be offered, it is important that the offer be timely and not be offered too late. Again, this result echoes what was found in the *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey*; that support is often offered too late, and it would be more advantageous if offered somewhat earlier.

Needs relating to the Criminal Justice System

Overall, a high level of dissatisfaction appeared to abound.

Participants felt that it was unfair that they had been burgled and did not seem to think that the system dealt effectively with offenders. Recidivism and the "revolving door" situation were topics that came up in discussion.

Participants were rather punitive in their attitudes towards offenders and felt that they are dealt with too leniently by the criminal justice system.

The general feeling seemed to be that criminal behaviour is a serious problem with complex social causes such as drugs and deprived

backgrounds, and that victims would like to see the system attempting to rehabilitate as well as punish the offenders.

The participants viewed drugs as a major social problem.

They also saw a direct link between drug abuse and crime and this appeared to lead to frustration and anger.

As far as restorative justice went, rehabilitation of offenders and educating them in the effects of burglary on the victim were viewed positively.

The participants in these focus groups did not appear to wish to personally meet offenders or take part in victim-offender mediation.

Recommendations relating to the Criminal Justice System

The burglary victims were, in the main, not satisfied with the criminal justice system. They felt that it was lenient on offenders, did not address the drugs and poverty issue, did not intervene early enough in offending behaviour and did not address the loss and intrusion to the victim.

In addition to this belief, and perhaps as a result of the belief, attitudes to offenders tended to be punitive.

The focus groups also showed the victims to be unenthusiastic about victim-offender mediation and unwilling to meet with a perpetrator after their own experience.

As with the families of murder victims, however, to alleviate any needs or dissatisfactions in relation to the criminal justice system would mean changing certain aspects of the system. This would be an involved and lengthy process.

It is the remit of support services such as Victim Support to advocate victims' rights within the criminal justice system. It is a recommendation of the needs analysis that they use victims' voiced dissatisfaction as verification that change is needed, and continue to lobby on their behalf.

Needs from the Gardaí

In general, participants were satisfied with the service they received.

Issues and needs arose in cases where a) the initial Garda response to the burglary had been slow and b) when there was confusion over the way the investigation was being carried out.

Many participants felt that they were short on information on the progress of their case and would have liked to know how the case was going, even if nobody had been charged for the crime.

Only one participant felt that there would not be much point in being contacted, if there was no positive news to share.

A need was voiced to be able to re-contact the Garda dealing with the case.

It appeared to be important for victims of burglary to know the name and station of the investigating Garda, and to be able to contact him/her when the need arose.

In one case where a victim had been given a card with the Garda's name and number on it, it was appreciated.

One participant described how the Gardaí were realistic with her, in telling her that it was unlikely she would get any of her possessions back. This participant found it helpful to be told the truth, so that she could get on and deal with what had happened.

Recommendations in relation to the Gardai

The main need that burglary victims expressed from the Gardaí was the need to be informed about the progress of the case. It is true that not everybody thought they needed the information, but the vast majority did. Participants asked for information, even if the offender had not been caught or charged with the crime. It is a recommendation that the Gardaí update the victim once every few weeks about the case, until it is obvious that an outcome has been reached, either positive or negative.

Some victims questioned the methodology that the Gardaí used when investigating the burglary. It is possible that investigation methods such as the gathering of forensic evidence might not have been explained clearly to victims, or the difficulty from the Garda side of gathering such evidence.

A difficulty also transpired in relation to being able to contact the Garda dealing with the case. Some participants did not get the name of the investigating Garda and found it difficult to trace him/her with subsequent questions.

It is a recommendation that all victims of crime be furnished with a contact card by the investigating Garda. Not only would this make it easier for victims to contact them, but the victim could then ring up in relation to any areas they feel are unclear.

None of the participants was aware of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal. Due to the fact that the Gardaí are in contact with victims of crime on a regular basis, it may be appropriate for them to be aware of the scheme and to pass this information on to victims where loss or damage has occurred (see financial needs).

Victims also expressed a need for information relating to security and crime prevention. It appeared that these victims, who were in the main not in contact with Victim Support or any other agency, looked to the Gardaí to point them in the direction of security, but that the need was not actually being met on a formal basis. It would also be helpful for the Gardai to put victims in touch with agencies that deal with security and crime prevention (see security and crime prevention needs).

Needs relating to the social services

Participants did not feel that they had any great need for the social services, but felt that elderly or more vulnerable people might need benefit from contact, particularly in relation to security and crime prevention measures.

Recommendations in relation to the social services

The residential burglary victims did not voice any particular needs for their age group from the social services. They did, however, voice needs on behalf of the elderly or vulnerable for assistance with security and crime prevention.

Due to the fact that this research is concerned with the needs that each group voices for themselves rather than for others, any recommendations to the social services for elderly victims will be left to the elderly themselves in the next section.

Financial and compensation needs

Satisfaction with insurance companies was low but no specific needs were vocalised.

When the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal was described, participants felt that statutory compensation would help in cases where insurance did not cover the loss.

Recommendations in relation to financial and compensation needs

There were a few grievances in relation to participants' dealings with insurance companies but no particular needs were vocalised.

In relation to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal, if possible the Tribunal could look at including burglary victims in the scheme, which at present is not available.

Security and crime prevention needs

Participants needed information relating to security and crime prevention after the burglary.

It did not seem like this information was being provided by any particular agency.

Recommendations in relation to security and crime prevention

There are several support agencies in existence that offer information on security and crime prevention to victims. Victim Support, Security for the Elderly and Neighbourhood Watch are just three of such groups. It appears that the Gardai did not offer the services of such organisations to the participants of the focus groups. It is a recommendation that the Gardai forge links with voluntary organisations and advise victims on where to go to receive crime prevention information.

Summary of Burglary Victims' Focus Groups

The results of the two burglary focus groups showed that burglary victims suffer cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects as a result of the crime.
Initial reactions such as shock and denial were described.
There were also gender differences in the effects mentioned, with males describing themselves as being angry more often than females, and in need of support less than females. This reinforces the results of previous research (e.g. Stanko and Hobdell, 1998), that there are gender differences in how the effects of crime will be manifested.
The emotional effects discussed were anger and fear.
Behavioural effects included being hyper-vigilant to noises and over-conscientious about security following the burglary. Participants described these feelings as lasting as long as several months.
Cognitive effects tended to manifest themselves in punitive attitudes towards offenders, negative beliefs about the criminal justice system, and coping mechanisms.

Four separate coping mechanisms were identified. They were all cognitive insofar as they involved different ways of looking at the victimisation: by "looking on the bright side", by extracting something positive" from the victimisation, by using situational self-blame, or by denial. Denial, however, is a rather negative coping mechanism, and was only used in the initial stages, immediately after the victimisation. The other three mechanisms were positive and appeared to help the victim to deal with the aftermath of the burglary.

In the cases where victims were not in contact with a support agency, friends, family and neighbours were the primary support providers. The results demonstrated the importance for those supporting a burglary victim -

professional, voluntary or family - to understand the above effects, to realise that they are all normal and that they should pass after a few months.

Of all practical needs that were voiced, those in relation to outreach support, timely support, useful information and compensation appeared to be the strongest. Recommendations were subsequently made in relation to Victim Support, the Gardai, the social services, financial needs, security and crime prevention, and the criminal justice system.

Needs Analysis Study

Section 7: Results of the Elderly Victims' Focus Group

It was intended to run two focus groups with elderly victims of crime. It was decided to keep the groups as homogenous as possible, one of the methodological requirements of running a successful focus group (Kreuger, 1994).

It was decided to interview groups of elderly residential burglary victims, because burglary is a crime a) frequently suffered by the elderly and b) most likely to generate the largest database of potential focus group participants. It was also agreed that it could prove useful to compare the voiced needs of elderly burglary victims with other burglary victims, to validate the fact that the needs were the result of a particular age group as opposed to a particular crime group.

It proved problematic for the Gardaí to generate enough elderly victims who were willing to leave their homes to participate in a group discussion. The discussions were to take place in the local Garda station, and Garda transport was offered to all participants, but in the end, only six victims were willing to come forward. Although it had been previously agreed when advertising for participants proved unsuccessful, that victims would be sourced by the Gardaí, the researcher advertised locally and nationally for participants as a last resort. Community and voluntary groups concerned with the elderly were also contacted, but the contacts did not procure any victims of burglary who were willing to come forward to participate in a focus group.

In the end, one focus group took place with six elderly participants as follows:

Participant 1 (P1): Female victim of residential burglary

Participant 2 (P2): Female victim of residential burglary

Participant 3 (P3): Female victim of residential burglary. Wife of P4.

Participant 4 (P4): Male victim of residential burglary. Husband of P3.

Participant 5 (P5): Female victim of residential burglary

Participant 6 (P6): Female victim of residential burglary

All victims were in the 65+ age group and lived in the Dun Laoghaire Garda District. The discussion lasted an hour and a half.

Victims' emotions and other interesting psychological effects were discussed.

- General psychological effects including initial reactions
- Emotional effects – Fear, Anger
- Behavioural effects
- Coping mechanisms – could have been worse, look on the bright side, denial, self-blame
- Support needs

The following are areas where elderly burglary victims voiced needs, dissatisfactions and/or shortcomings in service provision.

- Victim Support
- The Criminal Justice System, including offenders and restorative justice
- The Gardaí
- Social services
- Financial needs, compensation and insurance
- Security and crime prevention needs

The data generated by the elderly victims' focus group appear as quotations in the following section. Further commentary and interpretation of the data can be found in Section 8 – Discussion and Recommendations.

Psychological effects

General psychological effects

In general, the psychological effects felt by the elderly victims appeared to be less than those described by the younger victims. One who was not badly affected said -

"We weren't traumatised or anything...psychologically or anything, no I didn't (need support)." (E-P3)

Initial reactions to discovering the burglary were described.

"I just couldn't think for a moment what I had, much less what I had lost!...At first I didn't feel anything, but when my son was taking me into the room I was going to cry, but then I didn't. Then I felt a bit scared, as the days went on I felt a bit scared, because the hole was still in the ceiling, you know?" (E-P5)

One participant had had contact with the offender.

"I was in shock later. I was in shock, days later...I got the (council) to put extra locks on the windows, on the two windows." (E-P6)

In contrast with the younger burglary groups, three of the six participants in this group had had contact with the offender. Two (P1 and P6) had been threatened with knives.

Emotional effects

There appeared to be a mixture of reactions to the burglary. Some participants described themselves as badly affected and others said they had not really been affected at all.

One participant said that she was not frightened.

"No, I wasn't a bit frightened. I just thought (the offender) was stupid, or a bit crazy or something." (E-P2)

However, the same participant did go on to imagine a worst-case scenario, which in some cases is an indicator of fear. It at least showed that she had thought seriously about her experience.

"If I'd tried to get hold of (the offender)...she probably would have got aggressive then, you'd never know."

However, some participants did describe at frequent intervals the effect that the crime had on them. In one case, it was in sharp contrast to the declaration at the beginning of the conversation that she was not in need of support.

"Well, I don't think I need support...I'm telling you here and now that I go to bed every night with a knife under my pillow. And a light on that I never had before, which bothers me, you know, at one corner of the room. This lamp is on. And I have this knife under the pillow, I have a hammer at one side of the bed, and at the other a big brush handle. Because I am scared it will happen again." (E-P6)

One participant was frightened that the burglars would come back.

"I just don't know if they're going to come back, you know? Because they must realize that they didn't finish looking through the room...At first I didn't feel anything, but when my son was taking me into the room, I was going to cry but then I didn't. Then I felt a bit scared, as the days went on I felt a bit scared, because the hole was still in the ceiling, you know?" (E-P5)

One female victim described anger.

"I was just annoyed, you know?...It didn't take a feather out of me. It just annoyed me." (E-P6)

Behavioural effects

Not many behavioural changes were described by the elderly. One participant said that she had put locks on the windows immediately after the burglary, but this was the only one mentioned.

"I live in a Co. Council flat, and immediately I got them to put extra locks on the windows, on the two windows, on the front window and on the back window." (E-P6)

Overall, the emotional and behavioural effects described by the elderly were less than those described by the other groups.

Cognitive effects

Cognitive effects were displayed in respondents' views about the various voluntary, social and statutory bodies they encountered. These are described in detail, agency by agency, later in the chapter.

The way an individual copes with burglary can also be seen as a cognitive effect, insofar as their world view is invoked or re-shaped to give meaning to what has happened. Coping mechanisms are described below.

Coping mechanisms

Some of the elderly victims' remarks indicate that some of them used similar coping strategies to the other burglary victims: denial (initially), "it could have been worse", "look on the bright side" and self-blame.

Denial was described immediately following the burglary.

"How about you, (P1)? Did you feel you needed support?" (Facilitator)

"No. Because as I said, it hadn't really happened as far as I was concerned. I was just in a daze." (E-P1)

Denial can be seen as an early-stage coping mechanism.

"It could have been worse" involves the use of downward comparison techniques to compare oneself with one worse off, or to imagine a worse-case scenario, in order to feel more positive about one's own situation or one's own part in it.

"And (the offender) went off. If I'd tried to get hold of her...she probably would have got aggressive then. You never know." (E-P2)

"Well, we were lucky. I mean, we didn't meet anybody, you know." (E-P3)

"Look on the bright side" involves seeking something positive in the situation, such as a lesson learned as a result of the experience.

"Well, we feel somewhat safer anyway, that we have an alarm in since then. Because the guards said to us that they go along roads and they look for the house without the alarm, and they go for it. And that was us." (E-P3)

Installing an alarm was for this woman a lesson learned. It is also interesting to note the use of the belief in a just world, as illustrated by the *Crime Impact Survey*. In BJW language, this participant is saying, "Things happen for a reason, therefore I was burgled because I did not have an alarm. I have since installed an alarm, therefore I have reduced my chances of being burgled in the future."

This participant also blamed herself somewhat for not having the alarm installed at the time of the burglary. She had had it installed since. This is another example of constructive self-blame, where the victim re-gains control over events by examining his/her own part in them. In the future, if one takes steps to rectify the situation, one can help to stop the negative event occurring. In this way, self-blame can be used as a coping mechanism.

Support needs

The elderly are often viewed in victimological literature as being a more vulnerable age group, and one in more need of support after crime. However, the surprising thing was that several participants felt that they did not need a lot of support.

"Well, there was support, I suppose, from the police when we went down, but I wouldn't say there was any other support I ever needed. Because I wasn't hurt in my case, or even threatened...I've no family besides me. I have good neighbours...But I don't see them really. I didn't go around looking for them, or anything." (E-P2)

"Did you feel that you needed support around that time?" (Facilitator)

"I didn't. No, I didn't. All I felt was that I wanted an alarm put in...I had the family all round, and all that, you know? But I can't say I needed it. You know, it was nice to have it, but I didn't need it." (E-P3)

"How about you, (P1)? Did you feel you needed support?" (Facilitator)

"No, because...it hadn't really happened as far as I was concerned. I was just in a daze." (E-P1)

"And afterwards, as the daze wore off?" (Facilitator)

"I was just annoyed, you know. I mean, maybe if I'd been 17 or something, I might have, you know? But being the age I am, and having had quite a lot of experience one way or another...it didn't take a feather out of me." (E-P1)

As opposed to younger people looking at the elderly as a vulnerable group in need of support, it appeared that this elderly participant viewed young people as being more vulnerable and in need of support!

"Do you feel that you needed support after the burglary?" (Facilitator)

"You mean like emotionally? I don't think so. I would just like to feel safe." (E-P5)

One participant stated at first that she didn't feel in need of support.

"Well, I don't think I need support." (E-P6)

However, she went on to describe the terrible effect the crime was having on her.

"I said to (the guard), 'If I'm up for murder one of these days, I'm telling you here and now that I go to bed every night with a knife under my pillow.' And a light on that I never had before, which bothers me, you know, at one corner of the room. This lamp is on. And I have this knife under the pillow, I have a hammer at one side of the bed, and at the other a big brush handle. Because I am scared it will happen again." (E-P6)

Practical needs

Victim Support

None of the participants in the elderly focus group had had any support from Victim Support. Indeed, when questioned about support as above, participants felt that they did not need it. Several did, however, go on to describe the effects that the burglary had had on them, so it is possible that a latent need for support did exist but was not recognised by the group.

A practical need arose for information on security and crime prevention (see information needs). It could be argued that this is a need that could be filled by a community organisation, such as Victim Support, although the participants did not mention the need for security information at the time when they were asked about their needs from a support agency.

The Criminal Justice System

As with the other groups, the elderly were asked for their views on the Criminal Justice System. They did not feel it to be fair.

"How do you feel, (P6), that you've been treated by the justice system as a victim of crime? Do you feel that it's fair?" (Facilitator)
"Of course it's not fair. But the law isn't fair either." (E-P6)

"Just reading in the papers and so on, I don't think it's fair at all. I think the victims are treated like criminals and the criminals are treated like people who have to be consoled, or looked after. I don't know. That's how it appears to me. And some of the sentences that are handed down are so...I mean, people who have been raped and so on, the person who did it, some of them get suspended sentences...Sometimes they get a short (sentence). Whereas somebody who's had something stolen gets a terrific long sentence. I think it's very unfair, actually." (E-P5)

Participants spoke about offenders. They saw crime as a social problem that needs to be tackled in the early stages.

"As far as I know, there's a high correlation between illiteracy and crime. Am I right? That was the case some years ago. A very high correlation. And you'd think this should start in the national schools when a child is young. If they have problems with reading." (E-P3)

"I think the problem should be tackled at the beginning. Probably a lot of criminals come from deprived backgrounds. And the problem should be tackled from there. There shouldn't be deprived backgrounds; children who come from deprived backgrounds are very badly treated at home. You know, sometimes they're homeless and so on. I think that's where it should start, from the source...because why have they turned to drugs in the first place? Because they aren't happy or because they're being ill-treated?" (E-P5)

As with the other burglary groups, the conversation turned to drugs. Many participants viewed drugs as a social problem that directly contributed to crime. Others believed that the burglar who had entered their homes was on drugs.

"You see, my guy wanted a fix immediately. Which is why he didn't take the time to go through anything. That was quite clear. And the amount of money I had was enough. Once he got it, he flew." (E-P1)

"It must be these drug people now because years ago we never got any break-ins." (E-P2)

"Well, they are mad, I suppose, or on drugs." (E-P3)

"I think drugs have a lot to do with it...if someone was addicted to heroin, or whatever they're addicted to, they're looking for money. They've no money to buy the stuff. Of course they'll be mad enough to break into someone's house to get money." (E-P6)

Participants were asked for their views on restorative justice. They didn't have many comments on the issue. One felt that perhaps an offender could be put to work in the garden!

"Well, if you could trust them, all right. You could be glad enough to have them do a bit of gardening for you. I'd rather have them in the garden than the house, I can tell you!" (E-P2)

However, one thought that any kind of restorative justice wouldn't help to rehabilitate offenders, because they don't really care.

"Yes, if you think that it makes any difference to them. But I think, quite honestly, that most of them couldn't give a monkeys." (E-P1)

The Gardaí

Satisfaction about the Garda service was particularly high amongst the elderly focus group.

"We called the guards and they came up immediately. We have no complaint or anything." (E-P3)

A couple of participants described their satisfaction with the Gardaí and felt it was reassuring to be told that the offender would not come back.

"I was very pleased...They came very quickly after I telephoned. And they were so nice. It was my husband that got the shock, actually, because he came back from a walk with the dogs to find squad cars in the lane...So he was the one who got the shock! But no, I was well pleased. And when I said to them, 'Is he going to come back?' one of them said they never come back. This one said they never come back." (E-P1)

It is not clear from this participant's remark that the burglars "never come back", whether it was something the Garda told her to reassure her, or whether the participant recalled incorrectly what the Garda said. It is known that many burglars are recidivist, although there is little data available in Ireland on how often, if at all, a recidivist burglar might re-visit a particular property. It may be incorrect information to advise somebody that a burglar would "never come back", but regardless of whether or not the participant correctly recalled what the Garda said, she felt comforted by the thought that her house would not be broken into again by the same burglar.

"I thought the Gardaí were great, actually. Sgt. C- came, he came before I arrived, actually. And then two other Gardaí came and took fingerprints for forensics. They said (the burglars) wouldn't come back, they never come back." (E-P5)

"I found the guards very helpful. And very reassuring. They took all my cigarettes, I had a stack of cigarettes. I smoke, and I had a week's supply of cigarettes, and they all laughed when I said, 'Oh my God! They haven't even left me a cigarette.' And one of them offered to go out and get me a pack." (E-P6)

However, again, the major need that participants expressed from the Gardaí was in relation to information about the case.

"And overall, were you happy with the Gardaí, and how they handled it?" (Facilitator)

"Oh yes, yes. We'd just be interested to know, was the fellow ever caught?" (E-P3)

"That was one of the things, they said they'd get back to me, but mine was too recent to tell you. If they don't get back to me, then I would say that's a gap. (P2) said that (the Gardaí) were just disappeared, that they were good in the beginning, but then they disappeared." (E-P5)

"Oh yes, and then you don't hear any more." (E-P2)

"Now, (the burglar) left the knife on the table and the detective who came, the forensic man who came, took it away and said, 'Do you mind if I take this knife?' I said, 'I never want to see it again.' But anyway, so far nothing...this was April." (E-P6)

The elderly also voiced a specific desire for there to be more of a Garda presence on the beat in their area. It appeared that this would give them a greater feeling of reassurance and security.

"One way we could be reassured is if we had a few policemen on the beat, just walking around on foot. Have them on the road, one in the daytime and one at night-time. Or even two. I think that's one of the things that's missing. We used to have policemen walking round, they could see some of the things. All the fellows would scoot if they saw them appear...(And) if they were walking on foot, there's far more opportunity of (offenders) being caught." (E-P2)

"I agree with that. Where I live now, there are about 56 flats and everybody heard about my break-in, of course, and everybody was scared. And the guards were asked for future...would they walk around, or drive around, at night just to keep an eye." (E-P6)

The social services

Participants were asked if they had any needs from the social services. As with the other groups, the concept of statutory social services had to be explained to the participants.

One participant described how financially badly off she was, and couldn't afford to replace her stolen goods. She was in receipt of widows' allowance, but did not voice any specific need for help from the social services.

However, at one point during the discussion, the conversation turned to personal alarms. The group did not appear to be aware that the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs provides grants via community groups to assist the elderly with security.

"I would love to have it, but I don't know where to go about it." (E-P5)

There appeared to be a need for additional security for the elderly and a lack of advertising about the current scheme.

Financial and compensation needs

Most of the participants in this group did not have much in the way of material possessions stolen during the burglary. The one participant who did, however, was the least well off and could not afford to replace them

"At the moment, I was never so badly off. I am receiving £75 a week because my husband died and he used to support me. £75 a week widows' allowance, I'm not even getting the full widows' allowance at the moment because my husband's will hasn't been sorted out. And I could say I can't afford to buy a new camera. I can't afford to buy a new walkman." (E-P6)

It appeared that a statutory scheme would have helped the participant who could not afford to replace her stolen possessions.

Security and crime prevention needs

As with the other burglary victims, a practical need arose in relation to security and crime prevention, which did not appear to be met by any particular agency.

"I was looking for advice about burglar prevention. Like these personal alarms. I asked my burglar-alarm person and he said you could get that at the Garda station. And I went to the guards and they said any good burglar alarm place would know about it. But I'd love to have one of those...I think I'd feel very secure if I had something like that." (E-P5)

This participant also needed extra locks put on the doors and windows, but because she was a Co. Council tenant, she was able to ring the council.

Installing an alarm was a first concern of another participant. However, she seemed to be able to source the alarm for herself.

"All I felt was that I wanted an alarm put in, which we got in after that." (E-P3)

As previously suggested, it is possible that the provision of information relating to security, where needed, could fall under the remit of Victim Support.

Needs Analysis Study
Section 8: Discussion and Recommendations of the Elderly Victims' Focus Group

The elderly victims expressed many needs, issues and observations that they had experienced in the aftermath of the burglary. They also expressed a wide range of psychological reactions and effects. Where needs or psychological reactions could or ought to be alleviated by particular agencies, recommendations are made accordingly.

Psychological effects of burglary

As with the younger victims, the elderly described feelings of initial shock when the burglary was discovered.

Psychological effects could be labelled emotional, behavioural or cognitive. Emotional effects were varied. Some had felt emotionally effected and others not at all. Fear and anger were mentioned by the participants. Behavioural effects were few, but there were some present, such as increased attention to security measures following the burglary. Cognitive effects manifested themselves as views and opinions about the criminal justice system and the agencies the respondents encountered after the burglary. Mental health effects were not mentioned.

Of the three victims who had met with the offender, one had not been threatened and felt that she had not suffered any negative effects. One had been threatened, but only described herself as annoyed. Only two participants – one who had been threatened and one who had not met with the offender – appeared to be badly affected by the crime. It was therefore surprising to note that, in contrast, the reactions of the elderly seemed less pronounced than with the younger age groups.

It was also interesting to note the language and the use of humour of the elderly group. It insinuated that they appeared to be more resilient to their experience than the younger age groups. A reason for why this could be so relates to the description of cognitions in Chapter 4 – *Crime Impact Survey*. It is possible that the long life experiences of the elderly result in flexible cognitive schemata, which can encompass new negative experiences without becoming overly negative themselves. Schemata such as "Self – generally invulnerable" or "Experiences – generally positive" would be adaptable enough to include a negative crime experience, yet remain overall positive. It certainly appeared that the elderly recognised the crime experience as being negative, yet there was a general feeling of being able to cope with the event, and that life would, more or less, continue as before.

Since the results of one focus group cannot be generalized to all elderly crime victims, it would be interesting to carry out further qualitative research on the effects of crime on elderly victims and the coping mechanisms they employ. It may prove to be the case that elderly victims handle the effects of crime better than is often believed.

In any case, the presence of emotional, behavioural and cognitive effects echoes the results of the *Crime Impact Survey*. It lends further credibility to the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig. 1.7) and indicates the variety of ways in which the effects of crime are manifested.

Coping mechanisms

It was interesting to note the use of almost exactly the same four coping mechanisms displayed by the younger burglary victims.

a) "It could have been worse", where downward comparison techniques are used to compare self with others less fortunate, or to imagine worse case scenarios in an effort to feel lucky they escaped so lightly.

b) "Look on the bright side" where a lesson is learnt or a positive outcome reached so that good can be extracted from the experience.

c) Self-blame, where the victim blames or partly-blames own actions in an effort to regain a sense of control over events.

d) Denial, which is used in the initial stages of learning about the burglary.

This further demonstrates the spontaneous use of the latter three coping strategies by crime victims. The active use of particular cognitive evaluations in order to cope with crime can also be seen as a cognitive effect of crime.

Support needs

Most participants said that they were not in need of support after the burglary.

The elderly in this group seemed to view themselves as fairly resilient.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to support needs

Only one participant had had contact from Victim Support. Most had said that they did not feel they needed it, although some effects of the burglary were described later on. It is possible that a latent need for support did exist but was not recognised by the group. There was nothing in the content of the focus group to suggest that an offer of support would be received negatively. The results of the *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey* suggest that outreach contact is appreciated by those who receive it, and that most people would not have actively sought out support for themselves, had it not been offered.

The fact that most participants did not have contact with Victim Support would suggest a recommendation for local advertising about the scheme, informing people what it is and how to get in contact.

A need transpired for information relating to security, house alarms and personal alarms. The need did not appear to be met by any particular

agency. Perhaps this need could be met by Victim Support. It is therefore a recommendation that Victim Support makes itself more widely known to burglary victims and continues to offer them support in case they may need it.

Needs relating to the criminal justice system

Most participants felt dissatisfied and felt that the system is unfair. They felt that the system is too lenient on certain offenders.

Participants used examples of deprived backgrounds and high illiteracy rates as contributors to crime. They felt that criminal tendencies should be addressed socially and that steps should be taken to combat the origin of crime at its source.

Most related crime to drugs without being asked.

No suggestions about restorative justice were made and the group did not seem very enthused about the idea.

Recommendations in relation to the criminal justice system

As discussed earlier, in relation the younger burglary victims, to alleviate any needs or dissatisfactions in relation to the criminal justice system would mean changing certain aspects of the system. This would be an involved and lengthy process.

It is the remit of support services such as Victim Support to advocate victims' rights within the criminal justice system. It is a recommendation of the needs analysis that they use victims' voiced dissatisfaction as verification that change is needed, and continue to lobby on their behalf.

Needs from the Gardaí

Satisfaction about the Garda service was very high among this age group.

A need was expressed for information relating to the progress of the case.

Some of the elderly expressed a desire for there to be more of a Garda presence in their area. It appeared that this would make them feel safer.

Subsequent recommendations to the Gardai

It would be helpful for the Gardaí to provide victims with regular information pertaining to their case. Perhaps, as with the other burglary victims, the Gardaí could furnish victims with a contact card so that they could also ring with any questions.

Perhaps as a result of being a more vulnerable age-group, the elderly requested more Garda presence in their area. Vulnerability on the part of the elderly was discussed in Chapter 4, page 86 in relation to fear of crime. It has been hypothesised by some researchers (e.g. Zedner, 1994) that the elderly may lack the physical or psychological resources to cope with a crime experience, leading them to fear the possible cost of a crime experience more than younger people and therefore to feel more vulnerable. It certainly did appear from the results of the elderly focus group that they would appreciate, and would be re-assured by, a stronger presence of the Gardai. Participants in the elderly focus group also felt that Gardaí on foot were more effective than patrol cars.

Participants were not aware of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal. It is a recommendation that the Gardaí advise victims of crime about the scheme, to enable them to apply for compensation where appropriate.

Needs from the social services

Participants were in need of information relating to security for the elderly. They did not appear to know that the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs provides a grant to help them with security and personal alarms.

They did not know how to go about getting a personal alarm.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to the social services

Participants related a need for personal security. It is a recommendation that the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs advertise their scheme to assist the elderly with security, as the scheme does not appear to be widely-known.

Financial and compensation needs

Most participants in this group did not have many material things stolen. Some participants were insured but the least financially well-off participant turned out to be the one who was worse affected financially by the burglary. The participants did not know of the existence of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal.

The participant who had been badly affected financially would have benefited from such knowledge.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to financial needs

It is a recommendation that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal consider including burglary victims in their compensation scheme.

Security and crime prevention needs

A practical need arose in relation to information on alarms and security. This need did not appear to be met by any particular agency, although this group in the main was not in contact with Victim Support.

Subsequent recommendations in relation to security and crime prevention needs

As with the younger burglary groups, the need for information on security and crime prevention did not appear to be met by any particular agency. There are, however, organisations in Dublin who do possess the information. It is a recommendation the Gardaí impart knowledge about

these organisations to burglary victims as a matter of course, so they will know who to contact if the need for greater security arises.

Summary of Elderly Victims' Focus Group

The elderly victims described a wide range of psychological reactions to burglary. Cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects all featured. The four coping mechanisms identified were: Denial, "It could have been worse", "look on the bright side" and situational self-blame. The latter three mechanisms are seen as conducive to dealing with the aftermath of the victimisation. Denial, though seen as a negative mechanism, was only used in the initial stages.

Emotional reactions included fear and anger. A behavioural response of adding more security to the premises was described. However, the emotional and behavioural effects described by the elderly were less than those described by the younger groups. This is surprising, particularly in view of the fact that three of the six elderly participants had had some form of contact with the offender. It can only be concluded that, in this group at least, elderly victims may be more resilient to the effects of burglary than is sometimes believed.

Practical needs included information in relation to the progress of their case, information relating to security and crime prevention and financial assistance. Recommendations were subsequently made to Victim Support, the Gardai, the social services and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal, to alleviate the voiced needs.

Needs Analysis Study
Section 9: Summary of Common Organisational Needs

It is difficult to give a simple summary of victims' needs from each organisation. The needs voiced by the families of murder victims were often quantitatively and qualitatively different to those voiced by the burglary and elderly victims. The following summary outlines the needs that victims have from each agency.

Victim Support

Families of murder victims need: High level of psychological support in aftermath of murder, opportunity of speaking to others who have been similarly bereaved, need to feel included and consulted in all proceedings following the murder, need for high level of support and information during the court trial, need for support and information in relation to the Coroners' Court

Burglary and elderly victims need: Information on the Victim Support service through publicity or awareness raising, support to be offered to them soon after the crime, information relating to security and crime prevention.

Needs common to all groups: Outreach support, information on criminal justice system, need for information relating to compensation, help with form-filling and application forms, need for Victim Support to advocate victims' needs and concerns among the legal, judicial and criminal justice bodies.

The Gardai

Families of murder victims need: Sensitivity at all times, continuous contact, to be facilitated to view the body, to be informed of Victim

Support, to be informed about *all* court hearings, to be given a copy of their statement, to be separated from the offender in court, to be informed of any appeals or early release of offender.

Burglary and elderly victims need: Information in relation to security and crime prevention, more Garda presence in the area.

Needs common to all groups: Feedback on progress of case, information relevant to case, for Gardai to tell victim their name and how they can best be contacted, to explain investigation methods (such as the gathering of forensic evidence) clearly, to be informed about Compensation Tribunal and to be provided with information on the criminal justice system when required.

It is interesting to note that information was a high-level need from all focus groups in relation to the Gardai. The Garda Charter for Victims of Crime, which is included in the Victims' Charter (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 1999), states the following commitment from the Gardai (p.7):

"*The Gardai are committed to addressing your needs and concerns in an empathetic, understanding and problem-solving manner. If you are a victim of crime, the Gardai will... outline the investigation process to you and ensure that you are kept informed of the progress of the investigation, including whether a suspect is charged or cautioned.*"

It appears from the results of the Needs Analysis Study that, no matter how well-meaning the intentions of the Gardai towards keeping victims of crime informed may be, many victims feel that information is an area of the Garda service that remains rather lacking. The link between an organisation's service users' satisfaction with the service they received, and need fulfilment, was discussed in Chapter 3 – *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey*

If the Gardai wish to increase victims' satisfaction with the service they receive, and maintain satisfaction at a high level, they may wish to aim to increase the information and feedback that victims are currently receiving on the status of the investigation.

The social services

Families of murder victims need: outreach contact, financial assistance, counselling services for adults and for children, medical care, to ensure children's welfare.

Burglary and elderly victims need: Information regarding security for the elderly, information on personal alarms, advertising of schemes to assist with security.

Needs from the media and the Coroner's Court are specific to families of murder victims, and can be found in the section "Discussion and Recommendations of the Families of Murder Victims Focus Groups".

Needs Analysis Study

Section 10: Commonalities and Differences among the Three Focus Groups

All three types of focus groups set out to investigate the voiced needs of the victims within them. Some commonalities and some differences emerged between the groups.

1. Atmosphere of groups

A difference in atmosphere between the groups was felt strongly by both the researcher and the facilitator. The atmosphere of the two families of murder victims groups was highly charged and rather emotional. The tone of the discussion was always serious and participants cried a few times over the course of the evenings. At the other end of the spectrum, the elderly participants were light-hearted during their focus group. They used humour and laughed and joked several times over the course of the discussion. The atmosphere of the younger burglary groups lay somewhere in between the two; both focus groups were fairly serious although nobody became very emotional or cried.

The atmosphere of the group appeared to begin immediately and stayed the course of the discussion.

2. Disclosure of psychological effects

Emotions and general effects were discussed unprompted in all focus groups. It was possible to extract plenty of data on the effect of the crime without it being specifically planned in the topic guide. All victims appeared willing, and indeed eager, to describe the effect the crime had had on them. It is possible that the description of effects and emotions would be a common by-product of any victim group, regardless of the actual intended focus of the discussion. It would be natural that such a group, formed out of common experience, would automatically compare events and effects.

Being a group of people who had suffered a negative event, it would also be natural for victims to discuss the psychological reactions each had to the event and to compare themselves with others.

3. Effects of crime

There were commonalities between the focus groups with respect to the ways the psychological effects of crime were manifested. Each group described emotional and behavioural effects. Cognitive effects came up in the discussions in the form of coping mechanisms and ways of looking at, and dealing with, the crime experience. The manifestation of emotional, behavioural and cognitive effects was seen to echo and lend further credibility to the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact as described in the *Crime Impact Survey* (Fig. 1.7).

There were differences in the levels of effect described, however. Families of murder victims described a wide range of effects that were both varied and severe. Emotional effects extended as far as loss of trust, fear, anger and loss of control. Behavioural effects too, appeared common. Many family members described mental health effects including depression, suicidal feelings and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The younger burglary victims also described emotional and behavioural effects. Although present both in number and variety, they were not as severe as the effects described by the families of murder victims. Finally, the elderly victims described some emotional and behavioural effects but, in the main, these appeared less pronounced than the effects described by the younger victims. The differences between the groups were interesting. Both the effects of different types of crime and the possible resilience of older age-groups was noted and discussed. Mental health effects were not mentioned by the burglary groups indicating that, whilst the victims were affected, the effects were not as severe as when a family member is murdered. Emotional, behavioural and cognitive effects came out in all focus groups. The findings echoed the Model of Aetiology and

Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig. 1.7), which notes that crime experience and demographics each play a part in contributing to the effects of crime.

4. Effects of crime on children

Both the families of murder victims and the younger burglary groups described how the crime had had an impact on the whole family, including the children. In the aftermath of murder, children seemed to be badly affected, often manifesting the effects behaviourally. Following burglary, it seemed that children were less affected, but effects were mentioned nonetheless. An important characteristic of the crimes investigated in the *Needs Analysis Study* is that both murder and residential burglary indirectly involved the child. In the case of murder, a familiar person is suddenly removed from the child's world. In the case of burglary, loss and temporary chaos can ensue. The results indicate that children are affected by crimes that touch them, even indirectly, but more research would be needed to be able to definitively describe the effects of crime on children.

5. Information Needs

A commonality appeared to exist in every focus group surrounding information. Needs ranged from information on the criminal justice system to information on particular agencies. It appeared that victims would appreciate information to be provided on an outreach basis, by Victim Support, by the Gardai or, as in the case of compensation and information relating to particular agencies, by the agencies themselves. It appeared that victims often regarded Victim Support and the Gardai as information providers and indeed, had an expectancy that they would offer all pertinent information to them.

6. Coping mechanisms

The aside remarks of the participants enabled coping mechanisms to be picked out in every group discussion. There were strong commonalities among the three burglary groups.

The same four coping mechanisms were identified in the elderly group and the younger burglary groups. These were termed "Denial", "It could have been worse", "Look on the bright side" and "Self-Blame". The families of murder victims also described coping mechanisms, but the difference was that these appeared to be individual as opposed to generic.

Some families did, however, describe how they were trying to extract something positive from what had happened, thus employing the "Look on the bright side" perspective. Denial was also common in the immediate aftermath of the murder. Self-blame was not particularly described during the focus groups, although guilt has been shown to be a psychological effect of traumatic bereavement (Murray Parkes, 1993) and situational self-blame can be considered an adaptive coping strategy (Joseph, 1999). "It could have been worse" was not employed, presumably because if a family member is murdered, it is hard to imagine anything in the world that could actually be worse.

Having verified their usage, suggestions on how to reinforce positive coping strategies can be developed.

Needs Analysis Study

Section 11: The use of Coping Strategies in the Support of Victims of Crime

The use of off-the-cuff remarks of all five focus groups showed distinct commonalities in the support mechanisms that victims employ.

The use of coping mechanisms has been well documented by previous research (e.g. Folkman and Lazarus, 1980; Carver et al, 1989; Johnston et al, 1995); indeed, other research has identified a multitude of strategies that an individual may employ to cope with a negative event. It was not the initial purpose of this piece of research to investigate the coping mechanisms that crime victims employ, but the surprising expression of these mechanisms by the victims proved too interesting to ignore.

Between the five different focus groups, four coping mechanisms were identified: "Denial", "It could have been worse", "Look on the bright side", and "Self-blame". All four mechanisms have been identified in previous research. "Denial" and "Look on the bright side" are two components of the Cope inventory (Johnston et al, 1995) that was adapted and used in the *Crime Impact Survey*. "It could have been worse" is a downward comparison technique, recognised and discussed by Winkel et al (1999). "Self-blame" is often used in the aftermath of a negative event and has been investigated by Joseph (1999) and Janoff-Bulman (1979, 1985 and 1992).

The use of denial as a coping mechanism tends to occur only during the initial stages of hearing bad news. Denial, in the main, is not a long-term coping mechanism, and serves only to cushion the psyche from the shock of negative news before longer-term coping mechanisms take over.

The other three coping mechanisms, however, are worth discussing in light of their helpfulness, both to the victim in coping with the crime and in the support of victims of crime.

1. **It could have been worse.**

   "It could have been worse" occurs where downward comparison techniques are used to compare self with others less fortunate, or to imagine worse case scenarios in an effort to feel lucky they escaped so lightly.

   Downward comparison techniques and their use in coping with a distressing event have been discussed by Winkel et al (1999). It is a way of looking at the experience in a more positive light by comparing what actually happened to what could have happened. The spontaneous use of the downward comparison is an indicator of the healing process.

   It may be possible to strengthen the downward comparison coping mechanism by positive reinforcement. When the victim spontaneously employs a downward comparison technique and finishes off in a positive manner by stating that they are lucky, the comparison should be positively reinforced by acknowledging the positive outcome and validating the comparison.

   Two cautionary notes should be remembered, however. The first one lies in the key phrase '*spontaneous* downward comparison'. The downward comparison should always originate from the victim. Providing a victim with a worse case scenario, or comparing the victim with another less fortunate could make him/her feel that the victimisation has been minimised. The victim needs to believe him/herself fortunate, rather than being told by somebody else that they are fortunate.

   Secondly, a distinction should be made between worse-case scenarios employed in downward comparison techniques (positive) and worse-case scenarios being used to discuss the fear reaction (negative). For

example, a victim who says, 'It could have been so much worse, only my television was stolen, but they could have stolen all my jewellery as well' is employing a downward comparison technique in a positive sense – to cope and come to terms with what has happened. This should be positively reinforced. However, a victim who says, 'When I think of all the dreadful things that could have happened, I could have been stabbed, I could have been assaulted, it makes me very afraid of being burgled in the future', this victim is exploring the fear reaction. Reinforcing the worst-case scenarios in this case would only serve to reinforce the fear.

It would be important to note what exactly is being reinforced, but a good understanding of the use of the downward comparison technique in coping, should be of assistance in avoiding the pitfall of reinforcing the negative.

2. **"Look on the bright side" where a lesson is learnt or a positive outcome reached so that good can be extracted from the experience.**

Extracting the good from a negative situation is another way of coping with a distressing event. Similar to the downward comparison technique, when the victim gets to the stage of being able to see something positive in what has happened, it is an indicator of the healing process.

Positive reinforcement of the process of 'extracting the good' could be helpful to the victim. Again, however, the 'looking on the bright side' should always originate from the victim. It should never be suggested to the victim that he/she should look on the bright side, or the victim may feel minimised.

3. **Self-blame, where the victim blames or partly-blames own actions in an effort to regain a sense of control over events.**

It may at first appear strange that it could actually be conducive to healing for the victim to assign him/herself some of the blame. The ethos amongst the victim services traditionally tends to be one of absolving the victim of all blame. The victim, after all, didn't do anything wrong. He or she was an innocent pawn, in the wrong place at the wrong time. And regardless of anything the victim did, the blame should always ultimately rest with the person who committed the crime. This may in some cases be true. However, it may actually be conducive for the victim to own some of the blame because it helps to re-assert some form of control over the situation (Fattah, 1997).

It is a helpless feeling to be victimised. If one feels that one played no part in what happened, it can lead to a loss of control. And if something has happened in the past, over which one had no control, what is there to stop it happening again and again in the future?

The use of self-blame can sometimes be used in a positive sense, as a coping mechanism. Assigning oneself some of the blame can help to regain control. "The burglary happened because I did not lock the windows properly. Therefore, if I lock the windows conscientiously in the future, I can help prevent another burglary from happening."

By positively reinforcing such beliefs, the victim can be encouraged to take control of the situation. However, the same two cautionary notes apply as with downward comparison techniques. Positive self-blame must originate from the victim him/herself. Suggesting an element of self-blame will only make the victim feel blamed by others and could have a negative outcome.

Secondly, a distinction must be drawn between positive self-blame and destructive self-blame. Positive self-blame is of the type employed in the above example, where the victim blames his/her own actions to regain control over the event and to ensure that the event does not

happen in the future. Destructive self-blame however, is when the victim blames his/herself with no positive outcome, such as the use of 'if only'. "If only I hadn't gone out walking on my own so late at night. If I had only got a taxi, the assault would never have happened." "If only I hadn't left the window open. What a stupid thing to do." Positively reinforcing destructive self-blame could reinforce negative cognitions and be unhelpful to the victim.

It is important to note the distinction between positive and negative self-blame.

It may be possible, and indeed probable, that crime victims employ many other coping mechanisms following their victimisation. Each participant in the families of murder victims' focus groups seemed to find his/her own method of coping with the murder. Most coping mechanisms are positive ones and can be reinforced by acknowledging what the victim has said, and encouraging him/her to explore their idea through conversation and discussion. Not all coping mechanisms are positive, however. Denial, if used as a long-term coping strategy, would not be helpful to the victim in coping successfully with the burglary in the long term. The abuse of alcohol or drugs would similarly be a negative method of coping. It is a recommendation that support workers be trained in the identification and use of coping mechanisms to assist them in their work.

The issue of coping mechanisms among crime victims is re-visited in Chapter 6, and is used in proposing a framework to support victims of crime.

Needs Analysis Study

Section 12: Conclusions from the Needs Analysis Study

The *Needs Analysis Study* used a qualitative approach to investigate the voiced needs of three different types of crime victims: Residential burglary victims, elderly victims and families of murder victims. Focus groups were selected as the best approach, and within each focus group discussion, a semi-structured process was adopted.

The *Needs Analysis Study* originated from two separate perspectives: the psychological and the organisational. The psychological perspective was used to further investigate victims' cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects and to translate those effects into specific support needs. The specific support needs were used to make recommendations to the existing victim support service, on how to improve the service they currently provide.

The organisational perspective was used when compiling victims' voiced needs from every agency they encountered. It was one of the basic beliefs of the study that the voiced needs of the service users would provide the various organisations with crucial information about the population they serve. In turn, the information could be used to plan new services, justify funding and maintain service quality.

The two perspectives blended together well. Any organisation wishing to meet victims' needs should value the knowledge of the effects of crime on the victims. The more familiar an organisation is with the effects of crime on, and the subsequent needs of, its service users, the more it can strive to meet their needs and improve the quality of service. Similarly, some negative psychological effects could possibly be alleviated by organisations

helping to meet the needs of crime victims. It would help, perhaps, to alleviate the confusion, frustration and loss of control described by victims in the study. Once again, the psychological and the organisational perspectives are not mutually exclusive; the results of each benefit the other.

The results of the psychological perspective showed the effects of crime in qualitative detail. Cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects were noted amongst all groups and mental health effects were noted in the families of murder victims' groups, lending support to the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig. 1.7) that was put forward in the *Crime Impact Survey*.

It was discovered that crime victims use different, but specific, coping mechanisms when dealing with the aftermath of their crime experience. Denial was shown to be employed in the immediate aftermath of the crime. Denial may be a natural response to a negative event, but is seen as a maladaptive coping mechanism. However, three positive, adaptive coping mechanisms were also identified. These were termed "It could have been worse", "Look on the bright side", and "Self-blame". It was concluded that knowledge of the coping mechanisms employed by crime victims would assist in their support. It was therefore recommended that the use of positive coping mechanisms be both recognised and used by those who support or assist crime victims.

The results of the organisational perspective revealed that crime victims have a wide variety of practical needs, not all of which are currently met by existing services. Recommendations were subsequently made to Victim Support, the Gardai, the social services, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal, the Coroner's Court and the media.

The *Needs Analysis Study* met its objectives by learning more about the psychological effects and practical needs of victims of crime. Psychological effects and voiced needs were turned into specific recommendations to the organisations that help victims in Ireland. By channelling the results back into the services that exist to help crime victims in the first place, academic results became practical, useful and of benefit from both organisational and psychological perspectives.

CHAPTER 6

HELPING VICTIMS OF CRIME:

AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, an integrative support framework is proposed, with the aim of assisting the non-professional supporter, or volunteer, to effectively support the crime victim. Firstly, the salient points of the preceding research are summarised and the various manifestations of crime impact are noted. A brief overview of post-traumatic illness is then outlined. Finally, each manifestation of crime impact is matched with a corresponding therapeutic model, to produce a helping framework that encompasses all effects. The aim of the integrative helping framework is to translate the results of the research into a practical format that the non-professional can understand and use. In this way, the results of the research are fed back to the victim support agencies, and are of ultimate benefit to the victims themselves.

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Integrative Framework

Section 1: Introduction

This thesis has largely been concerned with the various effects that crimes can have on victims. Some of these effects reiterated what had been found in previous research. Some of the effects were relatively new discoveries. But all served to demonstrate how varied the effects of crime can be and indeed, how heterogeneous the term "crime victim" actually is.

The study began in response to a request from Victim Support to have its services examined and assessed, and to further investigate the effects of crime on its service users. However, knowing the effects of crime and their subsequent needs on the victims, and knowing how to use that knowledge to assist, support and even intervene in the best possible way are two different things. One does not necessarily lead to the other, at least not without some form of training or guidelines on how victims can best be helped.

Victim Support in Ireland offers a 30-hour training course to new volunteers, and on-going training to existing ones (Victim Support Trainers Manual, 1999). However, due to the lack of research that has heretofore been carried out within Victim Support, it has not been possible to feed any research findings back into the training process. So, issues concerning the service users have not been fed back into the training, policies and procedures of the organisation.

It is up to the policy-makers of Victim Support how they wish to use the findings of this thesis. As outlined in Chapter 2 - *Service Assessment* and Chapter 3 - *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey*, the results could have bearings on policies surrounding volunteers, visits with victims, and best-practice techniques. It could justify current funding or be used when

applying for an increase. It could indicate the success of the performance of the organisation or indicate areas for change.

However, the research findings also have a bearing on volunteer training. It is the volunteers within the organisation who are in direct contact with the crime victims. It is they who are assisting and supporting them. But it would be unfair to expect the non-professional supporter to instinctively know how to use the results in a way that is most beneficial to the victims.

A good deal has been written on trauma, post-traumatic illness and post-traumatic stress disorder. The many symptoms are documented and clear. But less information is available on how to take that information and use it to really help somebody who presents themselves looking for support. How to move around inside their subjective world and really understand what things are like for them. When to offer comfort or to reassure. When to give information, when to point out maladaptive behaviours, how to identify areas where they may be "stuck" and how to move them forward. In short, how to deal with the presenting person in the way that is of the most benefit to them.

As a final part to the thesis, the findings of this thesis will be placed in a framework that would help the non-professional supporter. Combining a brief summary of the results with current knowledge of post-traumatic illness and behaviour, a framework will be proposed, which will integrate several counselling models and cover a wide range of effects.

The word "framework" is purposely chosen. Providing an all-encompassing therapeutic model would be a thesis in itself. It is the objective of this chapter to simply suggest a context in which victims of crime can be best supported but further expansion and modification would need to be undertaken in order to make a definitive helping model. The

framework will be simple in its approach but will be structured and will include helpful pointers from the experiences of experienced practitioners.

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Section 2: Research Summary

From the results obtained in the preceding chapters, the following have been demonstrated:

1. The *Service Assessment* showed that volunteers in Victim Support encounter all types of crime victims. Burglary, theft and assault featured most frequently but other crime types from murder of a family member to threats and intimidation, and from sexual crimes to domestic violence also featured.
2. The *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey* indicated that service users generally appreciate and are satisfied with the victim support they received.
3. Results of the *Crime Impact Survey* lent support to a multi-factorial model of the aetiology and manifestation of crime impact. Crime impact was shown to have many causes and the importance of looking at its effects in a multifactorial context was highlighted. Concurrent life stressors and the use of the belief in a just world to apportion self-blame were studied for the first time and found to contribute to the impact of victimisation.
4. The effects of crime highlighted in the *Crime Impact Survey* were further verified in victims' own words during the *Needs Analysis Study*. Practical and support needs were voiced in relation to all organisations that the service users encountered. Three long-term coping mechanisms also emerged from the study, which the researcher termed "It could have been worse", "Look on the bright side" and "Self-blame".

If these results are to be placed in a framework to assist the helper, then the framework must:

1. Recognise the positive effect that non-professional support can have on a crime victim.
2. Allow for any type of victim or circumstance.
3. Explore the wide range of possible contributing factors to the crime impact.
4. Examine the various ways that the crime impact may be manifested.
5. Identify and challenge maladaptive behaviours or cognitions.
6. Reinforce positive coping mechanisms.
7. Be beneficial to crime victims yet easy for the non-professional to understand.

Those supporting the crime victim would need to be familiar with the effects of traumatic experiences, not only from research carried out from inside their own organisation but also from outside. Research such as the results of this thesis needs to be placed in the context of what has been learnt before so that a broad, yet accurate, picture can be drawn of victims of trauma, its effects and their subjective experiences.

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Section 3: An Overview of Post-Traumatic Illness

It is true that not all crime victims are traumatised by their experience. Results of the *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey* showed that, on average, one in three respondents were indifferent about the service and did not feel that they needed the support.

However, the framework proposed here is one that aims to help volunteers support those who *do* feel traumatised by their experience, those who *do* feel in need of support and those who actually *do* want to talk to somebody. And as the results of the *Crime Impact Survey* and the *Needs Analysis* clearly show, those individuals are many.

To put the effects of victimisation in context, it is helpful to look at research that has been carried out on victims of other types of trauma.

Post-traumatic stress

Trauma has been defined as "*an event that is outside the range of usual human experience and that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone, e.g. serious threat to one's life or physical integrity; serious threat or harm to one's children, spouse or other close relative or friends; sudden destruction of one's home or community; or seeing someone who has recently been, or is being, seriously injured or killed as the result of an accident or physical violence.*"

(American Psychiatric Association DSM-IV, 1994)

After experiencing an extremely stressful or traumatic event, it is not uncommon for the victim to suffer a negative psychological reaction. Some such reactions can be long-lasting and severe, the most extreme being post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This chronic disorder has been exhibited

by persons surviving traumas such as war, sexual assault, sexual abuse, bombings, accidents or natural disasters. The disorder, recognised by the DSM-IV, has been well documented and there is no need to go into any further detail here*. (DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for PTSD can be found in Appendix 4)

However, traumatic experiences can incur a wide variety of other stress disorders and manifestations. These can include anything from depressive reactions to emotional disturbances, behavioural disturbances and adjustment disorders. Indeed, a clear relationship has been found between such stress-related disorders and stressful life events (O'Brien, 1998).

A stressful or traumatic experience, then, far from producing an "all or nothing" chronic stress reaction such as PTSD, can produce a continuum of disturbances ranging from the very mild to the extremely severe. This distinction between post-traumatic *stress* and post-traumatic stress *disorder* is important.

Common post-traumatic stress reactions

O'Brien (1998) identifies three discrete stress reactions that are separate from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

These are:

- Acute Stress Reaction, which comes on almost immediately after a stressful event. Stress-related symptoms are present but no particular symptom dominates. Symptoms generally reduce or disappear within a few days.
- Acute Stress Disorder, a diagnosis more serious and prolonged than Acute Stress Reaction and with symptoms that lie between Acute Stress Reaction and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

* Excellent overviews of the disorder can be found in Booth (2000) and Van der Kolk et al (1996)

- Adjustment Disorders, a "catch-all" type of diagnosis used when someone presents with symptoms that do not meet diagnostic criteria for other disorders. Symptoms tend to settle within six months.

Acute Stress Disorder and Adjustment Disorders are both recognised by the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

In addition to the above three particular stress reactions, trauma sufferers have also been known to exhibit substance-related disorders, psychoses, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders, dissociative disorders and comorbidity (O'Brien, 1998; Yule, 1999; Booth, 2000).

In short, there is a broad spectrum of reactions and disorders that a victim of stress or trauma could develop, both in the short and the long-term. Indeed, many of the effects of crime uncovered by the *Crime Impact Survey*, *Needs Analysis Study* and other similar studies on crime victims show a wide range of post-traumatic reactions that crime victims commonly experience.

Social support in the aftermath of trauma is necessary, where people can talk about their experiences to people who are knowledgeable of crisis support (Joseph, 1999). If such support is desirable, it would be best carried out in a supportive environment by those familiar with post-traumatic reactions and capable of matching basic therapeutic interventions to the particular symptoms displayed by the crime victim.

It has been suggested that support should be *stressor-specific* (Joseph, 1999). This suggestion involves the idea that some stressors require emotional support (showing that the victim is accepted and valued), others require cognitive support (advice, education or guidance on how to handle the symptoms) and still others require practical support (such as information or finance). Offering flexibility of support is a good approach, but as the

results of the *Crime Impact Survey* show, the situation is not as simple as different crimes (or stressors) producing different but specific effects. Effects of crime are diverse and numerous, and are particular to each person who experiences them.

It is the suggestion of this thesis that the ideal support be *victim-specific*. Inherent in this suggestion is the idea that support should also be *effect-specific*, because each victim will exhibit his/her own range of post-traumatic effects. This thesis proposes an integrative framework that is broad enough to encompass a wide range of effects and yet be victim-specific enough to be tailored to the needs and symptoms of each presenting crime victim.

Although at first this may seem a rather difficult objective, the *Crime Impact Survey* has gone a long way in categorising the many different causes and effects of crime impact. If the person supporting the victim is aware of the combination of pre-crime, crime and post-crime factors that contribute to crime impact and aware that such impact can be manifested in emotional, behavioural, cognitive and/or mental health effects, then they have the basis of a integrative framework from which to help most victims of crime. The Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig. 1.7) is the basis of that framework.

The integrative approach to psychotherapy is not a new one. Therapists who use an integrative approach believe that one therapeutic model alone does not encompass all types of client and all types of complaint. Indeed, some victims may be more open to one type of approach than to another. Many of the pioneers of modern therapeutic models such as Alfred Adler (Adlerian Therapy), Albert Ellis (Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy), and William Glasser (Reality Therapy) originally studied psychoanalysis but found it inadequate for many situations. They split from a more traditional

psychoanalytic approach and developed their own (Corey, 1996). Likewise, integrative psychotherapists draw on a wide range of therapeutic models and techniques rather than sticking to one particular approach.

In a similarly integrative manner, the framework being suggested here draws on a wide range of therapeutic approaches in order to match the approach used with the symptoms presented.

Integrative Framework

Section 4: Proposal of the Integrative Victim Support Framework

The *Crime Impact Survey* illustrated that:

1. It is the combination of pre-crime, crime and post-crime factors that contribute to crime impact. Although the crime experience is a large contributor, it is in tandem with other factors that negative crime impact can be experienced.
2. Such impact can be manifested in emotional, behavioural, cognitive and/or mental health effects. Each effect can be manifested on its own or in combination with other effects.

(See Figure 1.7)

The *Crime Impact Survey* found that, of the contributing pre-crime, crime and post-crime factors, concurrent life stressors, presence of injury, relationship to offender, crime type and education levels were the factors most closely affiliated to crime impact. Results of other research have found previous victimisation history, lack of support and negative involvement with the criminal justice system to be linked to negative crime impact. Regardless of the approach used, the person supporting the victim should explore with the victim the pre-crime, crime and post-crime factors outlined in the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig. 1.7). When the crime experience is combined with other negative influences, negative crime impact is more likely to occur.

Effects of crime can be manifested emotionally, behaviourally, cognitively or in terms of an effect on mental health. Effects can be manifested in isolation or in combination. To best treat each effect or symptom, it is proposed that an effect-specific approach would be used, with a basic

therapeutic approach being selected each time to match the symptom being presented.

It is proposed that the following therapeutic approaches be used as each effect of crime is exhibited:

Effect of Crime	Proposed Model
Cognitive Effects →	Cognitive Model / Cognitive-Behavioural Model
Behavioural Effects →	Cognitive-Behavioural Model
Emotional Effects →	Person-Centred Model
Mental Health →	Existential Model / Reality Therapy
General Effects →	Existential Model / Reality Therapy

Cognitive effects and use of cognitive/cognitive-behavioural therapy models

Cognitive effects of crime occur when negative thoughts, beliefs or evaluations arise following the crime experience. Such negative cognitions can be about oneself, about others or about the world in general.

It is normal for people to use direct and indirect experience to give cognitive evaluations of the world around them and to shape their beliefs about certain things. These beliefs are subjective and judgemental and are unique to every individual. When a negative experience occurs, this event becomes an experience which, along with all the other previous experiences, must be absorbed into the individual's view of "How Things Are".

Generally, this assimilation period doesn't take long and the individual is soon able to carry on as before. Questioning, "Why did it happen?" or

"Why me?" is normal in the first few weeks and months of the assimilation phase. Adaptation and healing usually take place as the answers to these questions are formulated.

Sometimes, however, the individual is unable to integrate the experience and cognitive disorder occurs. Examples of negative cognitions in relation to self would be having thoughts such as "I am worthless," or "bad things always happen to me." Examples of negative cognitions about the world or about others are; punitiveness towards offenders, beliefs about high crime prevalence, or negative evaluations about the criminal justice system. Cognitive avoidance mechanisms can also be used, such as not thinking about the event or putting it out of one's mind.

All these negative cognitions and strategies are *maladaptive*, i.e. they prevent the individual from being able to absorb the event into his/her life experience history (Ehlers and Clark, 2000).

The cognitive approach is designed to deal directly with cognitive effects. Based on the belief that psychological distress is a function of disturbances in cognitive processes, the cognitive approach works to dispute irrational beliefs through questioning negative thinking and supplying positive alternatives.

Cognitive therapy works in the following manner. It is proposed that this would be the approach to use with a crime victim exhibiting cognitive effects.

- Providing education and information on what happens after a traumatic event (or crime) and how the wide range of post-traumatic illness can occur.
- Encouraging the victim to think and talk about the event in a supportive environment, to confront cognitive avoidance.

- Normalising the stress reaction without normalising or minimising the traumatic event. Explaining that it is normal to develop a post-traumatic reaction after a trauma, it was the crime experience itself that was unusual.
- Recognising negative thoughts, beliefs and assumptions and identifying the logical errors behind them.
- Providing more realistic and positive alternatives.
- Developing a more helpful and positive view of self, situation and world.

(Richards and Lovell, 1999)

The cognitive approach also recognises that previous negative experiences may be recalled when a new traumatic event occurs. Old traumas may be revisited, or negative beliefs may be reinforced such as "I attract trouble" or "bad things always happen to me." It is important for previous victimisations or previous traumatic events to be explored with the victim in light of the new experience.

The cognitive-behavioural approach takes the cognitive method one step further. It recognises the interactions between cognitions, emotions and behaviour, and believes that they each have a reciprocal "cause and effect" relationship (Corey, 1996).

Cognitive-behavioural therapy involves educating the individual on how thoughts influence actions. Some behaviour modifications would be suggested, in conjunction with cognitive therapy. Cognitive therapy is carried out as above, but attention is paid to maladaptive behaviours as well as maladaptive cognitions.

Cognitive effects and use of downward comparison techniques

It is customary for people to compare themselves with others. It is how we get a sense of where we stand in life, and of checking that our thoughts, actions or emotions are normal. In the aftermath of a crime, a victim may compare his/her own experience with others. A comparison technique used adaptively during the healing process has been noted by Winkel et al (1999). Some crime victims may compare self with others and conclude that, in comparison, they were rather lucky and that things are perhaps not as bad as they seem. Comparing self with others who are less fortunate is known as downward comparison. Studies on downward comparison techniques found that it is not helpful for support workers to suggest that the victim is, on the whole, better off than others. This might imply minimization of the trauma that the victim has suffered. Instead, it is suggested that the support worker wait for the victim to employ downward comparison techniques his/herself, and then subsequently to reinforce it. This is a cognitive reinforcement technique and has already been shown to be helpful in the treatment of crime victims (Winkel et al, 1999; Winkel and Renssen, 1998; Winkel, 1998).

Cognitive effects and the use of positive self-blame

It has become traditional practice among those who deal with crime victims to absolve the victim completely of any blame pertaining to his situation. Victims are discouraged from ascribing to themselves any behaviour or action that may have contributed to their experiencing the crime. The victim is seen as innocent, blameless and totally undeserving of the dreadful crime that has befallen him. However, controversially, it has been suggested by some researchers that allowing the victim to ascribe to him/herself at least some blame or responsibility for the crime may actually facilitate the healing process (Frieze et al, 1987; Rosenbaum, 1980; both cited by Fattah, 1997).

Victims often feel powerless and feel that they have lost control over their lives. Allowing them to examine the part that they may have played in experiencing the crime could help them to regain some sense of that control.

"*There is little doubt that victims who are able to attribute the victimising event, at least partially, to their (own) behaviour suffer less trauma than those who believe that their victimisation was an unjust blow of an unlucky destiny.*" (Fattah, 1997).

In layman's terms, the argument would go as follows: "I, the victim, was mugged last week because I did not mind my handbag. I was walking along, carelessly swinging it from my wrist. I now rationalise that I contributed to a certain extent to my being mugged. Therefore, in future, if I pay more attention to my possessions and keep my handbag carefully by my side, this unfortunate incident will not happen again." This is using one's belief in a just world to apportion self-blame, which the *Crime Impact Survey* found to be adaptive in the healing process.

The type of self-blame that the victim employs, however, is significant. There are two kinds of self-blaming strategies: Characterological self-blame and situational self-blame (Janoff-Bulman, 1979).

Characterological self-blame occurs when the victim blames his own character for causing the event. An example of a characterological self-blaming strategy would be "I was assaulted because I am a useless individual". Characterological self-blame is related to a sense of loss of control over events, and generally negative outcome (Joseph, 1999).

Situational self-blame is when the victim blames his/her actions in the situation for causing the event. An example of such reasoning would be the victim in the previous scenario, who feels s/he was mugged because of the

way s/he was swinging the handbag. Such situational logic is related to a sense of control over own actions, and generally positive outcome (Joseph, 1999).

Self-blame is a cognitive process. When it occurs, the support worker should recognize it, and identify it as either characterological (maladaptive) or situational (adaptive). As with previous examples using the cognitive approach, adaptive cognitions are reinforced and maladaptive cognitions are challenged and/or modified.

Behavioural effects and use of behavioural/cognitive-behavioural therapy models

Behavioural effects of crime occur when a crime victim alters his/her behaviour as a result of the crime experience.

When an event occurs, it is normal to examine one's prior behaviour to see if the behaviour acted as a precipitant to the event. Recognising a relationship between an action and a subsequent consequence is known as operant conditioning. It is one of the most basic forms of learning known to living organisms. If the event was negative, and a relationship was recognised between one's own actions and the negative event, it is *adaptive* to consider avoiding those actions in future in an effort to avoid the negative event.

However, when a traumatic event such as a crime occurs, the learning process can become over-active or over-generalised. In an effort to avoid experiencing the crime ever again, the victim can "learn" a wide range of avoidance techniques that actually become *maladaptive*. Instead of avoiding walking alone at night, the victim of mugging can find him/herself avoiding going out at night completely. Instead of avoiding situations

where he/she is alone and vulnerable, the victim might avoid a whole host of real or potential situations in an effort to prevent the crime happening again. Avoidance techniques can even go as far as avoiding any reminders of the negative event. Co-existing with such avoidance behaviours are usually either suppressed thoughts and feelings or the other extreme; intrusive thoughts, memories or nightmares. When such maladaptive behaviours occur, the individual finds their lifestyle becoming restricted and the effects of crime impinging on their life on a regular basis.

The behavioural approach is designed to target negative behavioural effects. The behavioural method grew out of older classical and operant conditioning models and it believes that behavioural modification techniques are effective in combating maladaptive behaviours.

Behaviour modification works by using the following techniques:

- Identifying maladaptive behaviours that have occurred as a result of a traumatic event.
- Behavioural self-help, where the individual is shown alternative ways of behaving.
- Coping skills training, where positive coping skills and new ways of looking at the traumatic event are introduced.
- Relaxation training and anxiety management, where techniques such as breathing exercises, yoga and thought stopping are taught, and how to employ them in stressful situations.
- Systematic desensitisation and exposure therapy, where the individual is helped into a state of relaxation, and then "brought back" mentally to the traumatic event. He/she learns a new, more adaptive, reaction to the original traumatic event.

Behavioural therapy aims to increase people's skills so that they have more options for responding than the original, maladaptive response. They learn to substitute another behaviour in response to the original stimulus.

The cognitive-behavioural model is also used to treat behavioural effects. As discussed, it recognises the interactions between cognitions, emotions and behaviour. The individual is informed about maladaptive behaviours, and the disadvantages inherent in using them. The cognitive-behavioural approach uses behavioural modification in conjunction with cognitive therapy and is thought to be very effective (Corey, 1996)

Emotional effects and use of the person-centred therapeutic approach

Emotional effects are another manifestation of crime impact. Emotional responses to victimisation such as fear, anger and guilt have been widely studied, and both the *Crime Impact Survey* and the *Needs Analysis Study* noted a wide range of affective reactions from feeling panicky, dazed or uneasy to feeling sick, depressed or disinterested in general activities.

Whilst there is no specific "emotional approach" used in psychotherapy, the original person-centred therapeutic method places a strong emphasis on feelings and emotions. The person-centred approach is essentially humanistic; it gives particular attention to subjective experiences, thoughts and feelings during therapy. The focus is solely on the individual and his/her phenomenological world. In a supportive environment, the approach believes that people should feel free and able to express their feelings, and feel supported in their expression by the therapist (Corey, 1996).

Three conditions are seen as important in the facilitation of expression:

- The congruence, or genuineness, of the therapist.
- Unconditional positive regard and acceptance, regardless of what the person experienced or what is expressed.
- Accurate empathic understanding.

A crucial aspect of the person-centred approach is the display of empathy, whereby the therapist uses reflection techniques to facilitate the expression of emotions. Reflecting the individual's feelings back to him or her is essentially like holding up an emotional "mirror", so people can examine how they are feeling and feel supported and understood. Indeed, inherent in this approach is the belief that the people who present for counselling or psychotherapy have a vast potential for understanding themselves and resolving their own problems, if they are involved in a supportive and empathic therapeutic relationship (Corey, 1996).

The person-centred approach views the withholding or suppression of emotions as *maladaptive*. Conversely, the expression of emotions is seen as the first step in coping with them, and is seen as *adaptive*. In this manner, the person-centred approach is particularly appropriate when dealing with crime victims' emotional effects. Affective reactions are explored with the victim and reflected back to them by the support worker or therapist. Bringing the emotional effects into the therapeutic session allows the victim to express them, examine them, discuss them and finally release them, in a supportive environment.

In summary, the person-centred approach works on emotional effects by using the following techniques:

- Showing congruence (or genuineness).
- Continuously displaying unconditional positive regard, acceptance and respect.
- Giving accurate empathic understanding.
- Focusing on the individual and his/her subjective world.
- Attending to the "here and now", rather than delving too deep into the past or future.
- Concentrating on emotions and facilitating their expression.
- Reflecting back the expressed emotions.
- Believing in people's ability to understand their own selves and ability to resolve their own problems.
- Actively supporting the individual in becoming the self that he/she truly wishes to be.

Mental health and general psychosocial effects and use of reality and existential therapy models

The *Crime Impact Survey* found that general and mental health effects can be exhibited by crime victims in addition to the cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects detailed above. Whilst the cognitive approach is designed to specifically treat cognitive effects, the behavioural or cognitive-behavioural approaches designed to specifically target behavioural effects and the person-centred approach pays particular attention to emotional effects, there is no single approach designed to target mental health or general psychosocial effects. Rather, most approaches would hope that, in attending to the specific symptoms that they target, the mental or psychosocial effects would thereby be treated.

However, it has also been the case that the specific approaches above have proved inadequate for people presenting with other kinds of psychological difficulties. Corey (1996) notes that modern therapeutic approaches such as reality and existential therapy evolved because the originators of the therapies found other, more traditional approaches to psychotherapy insufficient for treating all types of complaint. Rather than focusing on one particular aspect of the complaint, these modern approaches are designed to help people with more generalised feelings of dissatisfaction, unfulfilment or unhappiness.

People presenting with mental health difficulties or general psychosocial complaints may exhibit a wide range of symptoms. Some of these can be diagnosed as a particular disorder using the DSM manual, as in the case of post-traumatic stress disorder. However, the stringent nature of diagnostic analysis is such that often no particular diagnosis can be ascertained from the presenting symptoms, leading to rather vague prognoses such as "Generalised Anxiety Disorder", "Adjustment Disorder" or "Unspecified Mental Disorder" (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

The general effects explored by the *Crime Impact Survey* were; feeling affected in some way by the crime, feeling low after the crime and feeling that the crime will have a lasting effect on life in the future. General mental health effects were noted by scoring victims on the GHQ-12.

Reality-therapy and existential therapy share the characteristics that they are not targeted at any specific effect or symptom. Rather, they focus on the individual and his/her phenomenological world and are structured to help clients make things better for themselves through empowerment, enlightenment and choice. Both approaches share the belief that we are free and therefore responsible for our choices and actions and work with the

presenting individual to accept responsibility and to actively choose ways to improve their situation.

Existential therapy places a particular emphasis on helping people resolve the dilemmas of contemporary life such as isolation, alienation and meaninglessness (Corey, 1996). Interestingly, these complaints have been shown to be exhibited by victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse, assault and families of murder victims. Existential therapy believes that we are not the victims of circumstance, but that we are what we choose to be. It encourages people to reflect on life, to recognise their range of alternatives and to decide among them. Once they begin the process of recognising the ways in which they have either passively accepted situations or made poor choices, they can begin to actively take control of their choices and shape their own lives.

Reality therapy also hands the responsibility back to the individual. The reality approach believes that people are ultimately responsible for what we choose to do with our lives, and that in a warm, accepting, non-punitive environment we are willing to learn more effective choices, or more responsible ways to live our lives. In this way, the reality method draws on both the person-centred and the behavioural (learning) approaches.

However, the reality approach goes a step further, in stressing that it is not the way the real world exists that influences our behaviour, but the way we *perceive* it to exist. Behaviour is total; that is, it involves the four components of doing, thinking, feeling and physiology. This means that people are responsible for choosing not only what they are doing, but also what they are thinking, feeling and physically experiencing (Corey. 1996).

It is the inclusion of the many cognitions, behaviours and feelings that leads to the proposal of the reality and existential therapy approaches as most suitable for dealing with mental health and general psychosocial effects. The following techniques are used to help people see the world from a more active and responsible viewpoint:

- Helping the individual to examine his/her life and to see where they want to make changes.
- Encouraging them to recognise own alternatives and to decide among them for themselves.
- Explaining the connection between doing, thinking, feeling and physiology. Clarifying that certain behaviours can lead to related thoughts, feelings and physiology, and similarly, that certain cognitions can lead to related feelings, physiology and behaviours. Therefore, thinking or acting negatively can have a negative impact on many other areas of life.
- Encouraging the individual to formulate own action plan, to commit themselves to the action plan and to follow through with their commitment.
- Reinforcing any feelings that the individual may him/herself propose in relation to empowerment or choice.
- Therapist is more directive and educative than in other approaches. Therapist points out where individual is going wrong and constantly hands the responsibility for thoughts, feelings and actions back to him/her.

Integrative Framework

Section 5: General Patterns and Strategies

So far, the discussion has focused on the difference between the various therapeutic approaches and shown the appropriateness of each approach to a particular set of presenting symptoms. As each person may present with a variety of effects following a crime, a variety of therapeutic approaches may have to be employed. However, within the use of each therapeutic approach is a general format common to all therapeutic frameworks.

It is the relationship between the client and therapist, or support worker, that is crucial to support (Booth, 2000; Van der Kolk *et al*, 1996). Previous studies on clients in therapy have shown similar levels of success common to all therapeutic approaches, suggesting that it is not the kind of method used that is important, but that therapy has been offered at all. Underlying the apparently similar successes of different therapies is the relationship that is built between the therapist and client; an environment of trust, empathy and respect where the client feels able to vent his/her thoughts, feelings and emotions and yet still be accepted for who he/she is. Indeed, support in the aftermath of trauma has been considered essential, where people can talk about their experiences to people who are knowledgeable of crisis support (Joseph, 1999).

The common elements of the various psychotherapeutic models are; listening to the client, supporting the client, remaining objective, empathic and non-judgemental, normalising the reactions or symptoms, identifying problematic areas, working with the client towards the resolution of any difficulties, and helping to restore the "normal", functioning individual (Van der Kolk, 1996).

It is important to follow some kind of structure in the therapeutic contact. Booth (2000) suggests three phases that therapists use with trauma survivors. During the first phase, the therapist establishes trust. (S)he provides information when appropriate, gives support, and listens and reflects back feelings and important points. During the second phase, there is more concentration on the traumatic event; on acknowledging and processing what happened. The third phase is usually more future-oriented. The client is asked what (s)he would like to change or see happen. There is a focus on relationships and on formulating goals. Phases are of different lengths, depending on the projected length of the contact with the client, but the therapist bears the three phases in mind.

From his work with trauma survivors, Booth (2000) notes certain advantages of debriefing, regardless of the particular approach used. The advantages to debriefing are similar to the advantages of offering crisis support to victims of crime, who may also be traumatised.

- Facts are shared so the victim receives all relevant information pertaining to his/her situation.
- Effects of the traumatic event are normalised and placed in context.
- Those at higher risk of more serious psychological problems are identified.
- The victim receives support and understanding, and a feeling of their needs being taken into account.

Those who have participated in debriefing have been positive about its effects (Booth, 2000). Similarly, the *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey* revealed the high proportion of crime victims who felt that the support they received was of some benefit to them in coping with the crime experience.

Helpful strategies

The specific psychotherapeutic approaches proposed to treat each particular symptom or effect, and the general pattern of contact which practitioners find most effective have been described. In addition, the following are methods and strategies that practicing therapists have found to be helpful in dealing with clients. Using advice from practitioners who have first hand experience of dealing with victims of trauma, one can learn not only "what happens" to trauma survivors, but also "what works".

Ehlers and Clark (2000), from their experience of working with victims of trauma, propose the following strategies to help the client.

- Find out what were or are the worst things about the trauma.
- Find out when the victim dissociates or withdraws.
- Explore the victim's own beliefs about what's going on for them.
- Identify post-traumatic events that may be important.
- Explain and normalise reactions and symptoms (while recognising the event they have experienced).
- Identify strategies that are being employed. Look out for maladaptive ones.
- Explain that the trauma has to be fully processed and assimilated into the individual's conglomerate of previous experiences.
- Encourage the victim to think about the trauma more and to discuss it fully.
- Suggest to the victim that (s)he write a full account of the event down.
- Explain that thoughts actually occur more frequently when one tries to suppress them. Encourage the victim to "go with" the thought when it occurs rather than trying to avoid thinking about it altogether.

- Get the victim to "reclaim" their former life and activities.
- Use the technique of "reliving" the event, but with new cognitive restructuring. Show that the victim is not falling apart by revisiting the memory.
- If memories seem vague or disordered, remember that as therapy progresses, memories will become more coherent.

The following can be learnt from Booth (2000):

- Be aware and remind the victim that post-traumatic illness can be a long-term, chronic illness, for which there is no instant "cure".
- Notwithstanding, both victims and partners need to be informed that it will not be like this all the time; that most symptoms will recede with time and they can have their lives back again.
- Encourage victims to speak to and include their partners or families. It can also be difficult for those close to the victim following a traumatic event. Communication can help partners and families feeling themselves left out and alienated.
- Giving information to the victim about trauma and its effects is not only conducive to the healing process, but empowers the victim and eases feelings of confusion, frustration and helplessness.
- Advise the victim to start some new pastimes or some new friendships. Remind them that things do not have to be exactly the way they were before the incident; it is okay to make some changes in one's lifestyle once the changes are not maladaptive or disadvantageous to the healing process.
- Ensure that the therapist acknowledges the trauma the victim has been through, as such acknowledgement is important to them.
- Discuss life before the traumatic event so the victim can see how things were and work towards restoring that normality.

A Critique of the Integrative Framework

The Integrative Helping Framework was designed to define and encompass the many different causes and effects of crime impact as outlined by the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig. 1.7). The objective of proposing such a framework was to assist non-professionals in exploring all aspects of the crime experience with the presenting victim.

It was noted, both in Chapter 1 – *Introduction*, and in Chapter 4 – *Crime Impact Survey*, that the different conceptualisations of effects of crime (general, emotional, behavioural, cognitive and mental health) are not mutually exclusive categories, and that it would not be unusual for a victim to present with varying levels of manifestation of all the different effects. In other words, it may be possible for a victim to present with general, emotional, behavioural, cognitive *and* mental health effects.

The Integrative Framework has advocated matching the different effects described by the victim to appropriate psychotherapeutic interventions. General effects and general mental health effects such as acute stress reactions or acute stress disorders can be explored using an existential model of psychotherapy. Emotional effects can be explored using a person-centred model. Behavioural effects can be investigated using the cognitive-behavioural model, while cognitive effects would best be matched with the cognitive approach.

This may be a tall order for the non-professional. It might sound like this requires him/her to have a knowledge of several psychotherapeutic techniques, at a level beyond which (s)he is able to deliver. Firstly, (s)he would need to identify the particular effect being described by the victim and, as we have seen, there is quite a degree of overlap between the different effects. The non-professional may experience difficulty in categorising what (s)he hears. Secondly, it might sound like a lot to require

of a non-professional that (s)he invoke a range of psychotherapeutic models with one victim, and perhaps even within one session.

It is more common for professional psychotherapists to use a more linear approach with clients. At first, one particular model is employed, depending on the school of thought to which the particular psychotherapist belongs. (S)he may have a particular interest in cognitive-behavioural therapy, or perhaps is a reality therapist. The model of choice is used with the client for the first few sessions. If it appears that a different approach is required, the psychotherapist will then invoke a second psychotherapeutic theory. It would be unusual for a professional to use a variety of techniques with one client in a single session. It could be said that doing so could be extremely difficult for somebody who is has not even studied therapeutic intervention to qualification level.

Another criticism of non-professional support is that voluntary agencies and their non-qualified personnel could in fact be in danger of inadvertently harming crime victims instead of helping them (Fattah, 1997). It has been suggested that non-professional intervention, however well-meaning, may actually delay victims' recovery processes instead of speeding them up or even just allowing them to spontaneously remit (Davis and Henley, 1990; quoted by Fattah, 1997). Providing the wrong kind of therapy, or providing it inappropriately may actually have a detrimental effect on the people the non-professional agency is actually trying to help.

However, it is not the intention of the Integrative Framework to advocate that non-professional supporters should actually be offering psychotherapy to crime victims. Such a specialised and highly skilled area should be left to those who are qualified to undertake it. Nor is it the intention of the Framework to suggest that non-professionals should be taught courses in advanced psychotherapy or mental health diagnosis. What the Framework

does advocate, however, is that crime impact is manifested on several levels and that each level should be explored with the victim to facilitate the healing process. When a particular effect of crime is presented by the victim, and the volunteer or assistance personnel can identify it as emotional, behavioural, cognitive or generally related to mental health or unhappiness, then the practical elements of the related therapeutic model as described previously, can be invoked. The Integrative Framework uses the more practical elements of each psychotherapeutic approach. It enables the effect of crime to be discussed and explored, with practical pointers on how maladaptive thoughts, feelings or behaviours can be addressed. In practice, this is little more than what is done by Victim Support volunteers on a regular basis, particularly within the special services, where specialised and often longer-term support is often given. The Integrative Framework merely conceptualises the different effects and matches them with appropriate helping methodologies.

In conclusion, the Integrative Framework does not advocate that non-professionals should be offering psychotherapy to crime victims. Those in need of professional assistance should be referred on to other agencies as appropriate. Criticisms of non-professionals who may assist crime victims in a way that is beyond their depth are well-founded. However, that said, non-professional agencies *are* in contact with crime victims in this country, offering them support, assistance and a listening ear. To listen to and support victims effectively, some sort of framework or guidelines should be offered that would help identify the various effects of crime that a victim may experience, and match relevant helping techniques to those effects. It is the purpose of the Integrative Framework to assist with the expression of the many effects of crime impact and to suggest some concrete, specific ways of helping victims who present with those effects.

Integrative Framework

Section 6: Conclusion

To help those involved with supporting crime victims, an integrative framework of victim assistance has been proposed. A person-specific, or effect-specific, framework has been suggested, where the individuality of the victim and his/her manifestations of crime impact have been recognised.

Commonalities and general format of contact have been discussed. Specific therapeutic models have also been advocated, where they are best suited to the presenting symptoms. When cognitive effects are presented, use of the cognitive and cognitive-behavioural models has been proposed. When behavioural symptoms are presented, use of the behavioural and cognitive-behavioural models has been suggested. When emotional reactions are presented, the client-centred approach has been advocated as the most appropriate form of therapeutic support. Finally, when mental health effects or general psychosocial symptoms are presented, the existential and reality therapeutic approaches have been recommended. Finally, the knowledge of experienced practitioners in the field of trauma has been drawn on to further help the supporter with techniques and strategies that they have found helpful.

It has not been the intention of this final part of the thesis, to present a complete and definitive model for use in therapeutic intervention with crime victims. Unfortunately, such a worthwhile endeavour would be beyond the scope of this piece of research. Indeed, the non-professionals that the Integrative Framework is designed to assist should not be themselves offering psychotherapy to presenting victims, as doing so could prove harmful.

However, it *has* been the objective to place the results of the research in a practical framework that may be helpful to the non-professional supporter, could be understood by those not specifically trained in counselling or psychotherapy and would encompass the effects and symptoms of every type of crime experience.

The unfortunate dearth of research on crime victims in an Irish context, not to mention the shortage of research on therapeutic interventions best suited to different types of crime victim, means that more research would need to be carried out before any proposed framework could be considered definitive. The field of victimology has come a long way in studying and understanding the experiences of victims of crime and one looks forward to the time when victim support services themselves benefit from victimology research.

CHAPTER 7

THESIS CONCLUSION

The thesis, coming from both a psychological and an organisational perspective, had a dual focus:

1. To learn more about the subjective needs and experiences of Irish crime victims and the impact of criminal victimisation.
2. To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the service to victims offered by Victim Support.

Organisational perspective

The *Service Assessment* assessed the scope and nature of the support provided by Victim Support. It indicated the wide range of crimes that the victims in contact with the service experience and the wide range of support, both emotional and practical, that is subsequently offered to them.

The *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey* was designed to investigate the perceived satisfaction/dissatisfaction of service users with what they received from Victim Support. The results generally indicated a high level of satisfaction amongst crime victims with the service they received from Victim Support. It also, however, highlighted certain areas of dissatisfaction and enabled areas for improvement or change to be recommended to Victim Support.

Psychological perspective

The *Crime Impact Survey* proposed a multifactorial Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig.1.7). In essence, it advocated looking at the effects of crime in a multifactorial context, by recognising the many factors that can influence how a victim is affected by crime and the many levels that effects of crime can be manifested. The results of the *Crime*

Impact Survey generally supported the Model and supported the proposal of looking at crime victimisation in a multifactorial context.

The *Needs Analysis Study* used a qualitative methodology to investigate the voiced needs of crime victims from all the organisations they come in contact with. Psychological effects and support needs were also explored. Results were used to make recommendations to all the various agencies as to how victims' needs can best be met. The results also indicated coping mechanisms that victims employ, and lent further support to the multifactorial Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact.

Finally, the results of the research were used to propose an Integrative Framework, to assist the non-professional in supporting victims of crime. Recalling that crime impact should be viewed in a multifactorial context, contemporary psychotherapeutic models were matched to each manifestation of crime impact so that victims can be supported on all levels.

It was noted throughout the thesis that the psychological and organisational perspectives were not mutually exclusive; indeed, that each perspective actually served to enrich the other. A presenting crime victim could be better assisted and supported by an organisation that is aware of the effects and subsequent needs created by victimisation. In this way, the psychological effects of crime victimisation could be better alleviated by an organisations' awareness of those effects.

Similarly, an organisation can benefit from learning more about the psychological effects of crime on its service user group. Increasing first hand knowledge of the client group leads to increased efficiency, effectiveness and quality of service. The placing of the results in the integrative helping framework at the end helped to further combine the psychological and organisational perspectives by using what had been learnt

from all parts of the research to help the non-professional supporter to further help the victim of crime.

Summary of Results

The results generated by the thesis were:

1. Victim Support provides a wide range of support to victims of many crime types.
2. By and large, most victims are satisfied with the service they received.
3. Not all victims would have contacted Victim Support had the support not been offered them on an outreach basis.
4. Not all victims were in need of Victim Support, but the majority of them indicated a need for some aspect of the service.
5. Crime impact is multifactorial in both cause and manifestation.
6. In addition to the influencing factors of crime impact that were discovered by previous research, the *Crime Impact Survey* found that the presence of life stressors at the time the crime occurred had an influence on how affected the victim would be by the crime experience. There was some evidence to suggest that a victim's belief in a just world may also influence crime impact, but due to the limitation in size of the *Crime Impact Survey* questionnaire, more research would need to be carried out on just world beliefs before a definitive conclusion can be reached.
7. Effects of crime produce a variety of organisational and support needs.
8. Crime victims use a variety of coping mechanisms in the aftermath of crime. Those identified by the *Needs Analysis Study* were "Denial", "Look on the Bright Side", "It Could Have Been Worse" and "Self-blame".

9. The fact that crime impact is multifactorial in manifestation implies that a multifactorial, integrative approach should be used to support victims on all levels.

Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies

The thesis used a mixed-method approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. This strengthened the design and ensured the quality and validity of results.

The *Service Assessment* and *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey* both used quantitative, questionnaire-style methodologies to gain information relevant to Victim Support, and the service it offers to crime victims in Ireland.

The *Crime Impact Survey* and the *Needs Analysis Study* used different methodologies for different research objectives, but the areas overlapped with respect to the effects of crime on victims. The *Crime Impact Survey* used a quantitative, questionnaire-style approach that generated data in support of the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig.1.7). One advantage to using quantitative methods is that the results can be translated into numeric quantities, on which statistical tests and analyses can be performed. The quantitative data generated by the study did indeed enable independent, mediating and dependent variables to be constructed, and for hypotheses to be created and tested. From the results of the Crime Impact Survey, it could be concluded that concurrent life stressors, injury, relationship to offender, crime type and education were the five independent variables that had the strongest influence on the dependent variables, effects of crime. (See Table 4.3 for further information on the effects of independent variables on dependent variables).

Another advantage to quantitative research methods is that the numeric data can be used to make predictions. Predictions on numeric data could be

made by a regression analysis technique, using the General Linear Model. The General Linear Model was in fact used on the data in the Crime Impact Survey, but the categorical nature of some of the data meant that ANOVAs had to be used in place of regression analyses. The ANOVAs tested the associations between variables, and the interactions between two independent variables on the dependent variables, effects of crime in place of making predictions *per se*. In this way, it could be seen that an interaction between injury and life stressors affected subjects' mental health scores, and that an interaction between relationship to offender and previous victimisation influenced emotional effects. (See Table 4.5 for complete list of interactions) A future study using questions that generate continuous numerical data would certainly enable regressions, and therefore predictions, to be made on the quantitative data, but in any case, it is advantageous to be able to test associations on quantitative data.

The *Needs Analysis Study* used a qualitative, focus-group methodology to investigate the voiced needs of crime victims. Victims' voiced needs, in their own words, were the core unit of analysis and a wealth of organisational recommendations could be drawn up on the basis of those expressed needs. It is true that a quantitative questionnaire method could also have asked crime victims the level of their needs from particular agencies, but the verbatim comments of the subject group generated by the study have a very high face validity. A quantitative study could have generated a result such as "74% of families of murder victims reported that they were in great need of financial assistance following the murder of a main wage-earner", but a verbatim response may be far more poignant: "*You know, it's doing more and more damage. When (my husband) was murdered, my daughter was a twelve-year-old without a care. She turned into a little woman overnight. I always wanted, cause you know we weren't exactly rich, but I'd be able to go out and buy her fancy things, girlie things, nice things, but now I can't do it, you know, I just can't do it any*

more. It's horrible to have just one girl and you can't do what you want to do in the first place. It's just, it's crazy. Absolutely crazy. And why do I have to wait so long..?...I can't understand why they'd let someone suffer through the crucial times when the money's going to be there anyway. You know, it's so unfair. I mean, what good is it?...I've applied for compensation, but I haven't heard anything for so long." (FMV Focus Group 1 – Participant 9) Indeed, the data generated by the qualitative method were very descriptive.

The objective of the *Needs Analysis Study* was to investigate victims' voiced needs from the various agencies they encountered after the crime, but victims also spontaneously discussed the psychological effects the crimes had had on them. No specific questions relating to effects were asked of the participants, yet the effects of crime appeared to be manifested in the same ways denoted by the Model of Aetiology and Manifestation of Crime Impact (Fig.1.7) and tested in the *Crime Impact Survey*. Effects were manifested emotionally, behaviourally, cognitively and in terms of mental health. This further validated the use of the model, particularly when verbatim comments relating to effects were not asked of participants, so there was no chance of questions being leading.

A particular advantage of the open-ended, qualitative approach is that it can generate data further to what can be generated by quantitative means. For example, there has traditionally been very little research in relation to the coping mechanisms that victims employ in the aftermath of crime. Coping mechanisms were investigated by the *Crime Impact Survey*. Although several different coping methods were identified by the study, most respondents (68%) reported that they had employed a passive coping mechanism. Furthermore, the type of coping mechanism used by the sample of victims was not found to influence how affected by crime they were. It may be that, for that particular victim sample, coping mechanisms

did not affect crime impact. Or, it may be that coping mechanisms do not appear to affect crime impact in any victim population. Alternatively, it could also be that coping mechanisms do influence the impact of victimisation, but that the pre-determined, quantitative questions on the survey questionnaire did not adequately explore all possible ways of coping. Or, they may have been phrased inadequately. Such are the limitations of the quantitative methodology; we have no way of knowing exactly why some results do not turn out to be significant in the expected direction. We can only hypothesise and surmise.

On the other hand, participants in all the focus groups during the *Needs Analysis Study* described how they had coped in the aftermath of the crime. The families of murder victims appeared to describe coping mechanisms that varied from individual to individual, but both the younger and the elderly burglary victims described adaptive coping mechanisms that were able to be categorised into three distinct methods: "It Could Have Been Worse", "Look on the Bright Side" and "Self-Blame". It appeared that coping mechanisms *were* employed after the crimes, these had helped victims to deal with the crime, and that these could often be categorised, but quantitative research methods had not been able to come up with any results that were statistically significant. The qualitative data generated by the *Needs Analysis Study* would suggest that it could still be interesting to investigate the influence of coping mechanisms on crime impact, but that perhaps more attention should be paid to the variety of possible coping mechanisms suggested to respondents on a pre-set questionnaire.

There is value attached to both quantitative and qualitative research data. One has been used to test hypotheses and associations between variables, while the other has generated more descriptive data. In terms of the effects of crime on victims, both research methods generated data that

complemented each other and overall lent credibility and validity to the research results.

Finally, the recommendations at the end of the *Service Assessment* and *Service Users' Satisfaction Survey*, together with the *Integrative Helping Framework*, placed all results in a practical context, so that the academic research involved in the thesis could be of applied benefit to those who work with crime victims. In this way, the victim support agencies, and ultimately the victims themselves, become the direct beneficiaries of victimology research.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

Service Assessment Report Forms

Form 1	Local Branch Form
Form 2	National Office Form (Special Unit)
Form 3	Hospital Support Service
Form 4	Tourist Victim Support Service
Form 5	Court Victim/Witness Service
Form 6	Families of Murder Victims' Service
Form 7	Crime in the Workplace

Victim Support

29/30 Dame Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01)6798673

CONFIDENTIAL VISITOR REPORT FORM - NOVEMBER 1997

Branch Name: _____

Volunteer Name: _____

Visit Number: ◯ 1 ◯ 2 ◯ 3 Other: _____

Victim Details

1. Did you personally meet with the victim(s)?

◯ Yes ◯ No → **1.(a) Did you leave a card?**

↓ ◯ Yes ◯ No

2. Did they wish to talk to you?

◯ Yes ◯ No → **2.(a) Did you leave a card?**

↓ ◯ Yes ◯ No

3. No. of volunteers involved in this visit _____

4. No. of victims involved in this visit _____

5. Sex(es) of victims ☐ Male ☐ Female

6. Age(s) ☐ up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

7. Occupation (if known) _____ ◯ **Not known**

8. Living status: ◯ Alone ◯ Family ◯ Friends ◯ Other (please specify) _____

9. Date of crime: ☐☐ ☐☐ 9☐

10. Type of crime:

◯ Murder/Manslaughter ◯ Mugging ◯ Assault
◯ Threats/Intimidation ◯ Sexual Abuse ◯ Sexual Assault
◯ Burglary ◯ Aggrav.Burg'ry ◯ Theft (person)
◯ Theft (property) ◯ Other (please state) _____

11. Area of victim's residence ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

12. Area where crime was committed: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

13. Physical injury? ◯ Yes ◯ No

14. Was crime reported to Gardai? ◯ Yes ◯ No

15. Did Gardai inform victim of Victim Support services? ◯ Yes ◯ No

Case Details

14. **Referral Source**

- ◯ Gardai
- ◯ Spouse
- ◯ Relative
- ◯ Friend
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ Self (due to standard letter)
- ◯ Self (due to previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Self (no previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Other organisation (please state) _____

15. **Crime date** | **Referral to co-ordinator** | **Referral to visitor** | **1st visit date**

16. **How was the first visit established?**

- ◯ By telephone (co-ordinator)
- ◯ By telephone (volunteer)
- ◯ Unannounced visit
- ◯ Other _____

17. **How long was**

Visit 1 _____
Visit 2 _____
Visit 3 _____

18. **Distance from volunteer(s)' home(s): Volunteer 1** ☐ miles **Volunteer 2** ☐ miles

19. **Did/do you have to provide information about other agencies for this victim?**

If so, which one(s)?

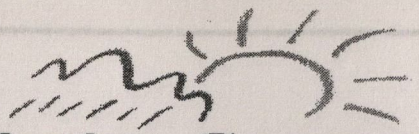
- ◯ Rape Crisis Centre
- ◯ Children's agency
- ◯ Counselling services
- ◯ Gardai/investigation procedures
- ◯ Other (I) _____
- ◯ Women's Aid
- ◯ Other Victim Support service
- ◯ St. Vincent de Paul
- ◯ Other (II) _____

20. **Did/do you have to liaise with Gardai for this victim:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

21. **Type of assistance provided (tick as many boxes as necessary)**

- ◯ Emotional Support
- ◯ Crime Prevention
- ◯ Social Welfare
- ◯ Coroner's procedures
- ◯ Other _____ (please describe)
- ◯ State compensation information
- ◯ Insurance information
- ◯ Information about criminal justice system

Please note any other comments or any unusual circumstances below:



Victim Support

29/30 Dame Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01)6798673

CONFIDENTIAL VISITOR REPORT FORM - NOVEMBER 1997

Branch Name: Special Unit

Volunteer Name: _____

Visit Number: ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 Other: _____

☐ **Visit** ☐ **Telephone Contact**

Victim Details

1. No. of volunteers involved in this case: ☐

2. No. of victims involved in this case: ☐

3. Sex(es) of victims ☐ Male ☐ Female

4. Age(s) ☐ up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

5. Occupation (if known) _____ ○ **Not known**

6. Living status: ○ Alone ○ Family ○ Friends ○ Other (please specify) _____

7. Date of crime: ☐☐ ☐☐ 9☐

8. Type of crime:
○ Murder/Manslaughter ○ Mugging ○ Assault
○ Threats/Intimidation ○ Sexual Abuse ○ Sexual Assault
○ Burglary ○ Aggrav.Burg'ry ○ Theft (person)
○ Theft (property) ○ Other (please state) _____

9. Area of victim's residence: ○ City Centre ○ Suburb ○ Town/Village ○ Rural

10. Area where crime was committed: ○ City Centre ○ Suburb ○ Town/Village ○ Rural

11. Physical injury? ○ Yes ○ No

12. Was crime reported to Gardai? ○ Yes ○ No

13. Did Gardai inform victim of Victim Support services? ○ Yes ○ No

Visit Details

16. **Referral Source**
- ◯ Gardai
- ◯ Spouse
- ◯ Relative
- ◯ Other (please specify) _____
- ◯ Self (due to previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Self (no previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Friend
- ◯ Other organisation(please state) _____

17. **Crime date** | **Referral to co-ordinator** | **Referral to visitor** | **1st visit date**

☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐☐☐

18. **How was the first visit established?**
- ◯ Unannounced visit
- ◯ By telephone (co-ordinator)
- ◯ By telephone (volunteer)
- ◯ Letter to victim

19. **No. of visits prior to first contact** ☐ visits

20. **How long was**
- Visit 1 _____
- Visit 2 _____
- Visit 3 _____

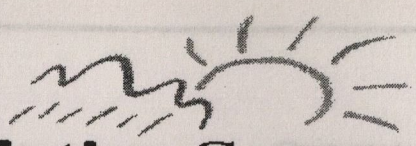
21. **Distance from volunteer(s)' home(s):** **Volunteer 1** ☐ miles **Volunteer 2** ☐ miles

22. **Did/do you have to provide information about other agencies for this victim?**
If so, which one(s)?
- ◯ Rape Crisis Centre
- ◯ Children's agency
- ◯ Counselling services
- ◯ Gardai/investigation procedures
- ◯ Other(I) _____
- ◯ Women's Aid
- ◯ Other Victim Support service
- ◯ St. Vincent de Paul
- ◯ Other (II) _____

23. **Did/do you have to liaise with Gardai for this victim:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

24. **Type of assistance provided (tick as many boxes as necessary)**
- ◯ Emotional Support
- ◯ Crime Prevention
- ◯ Social Welfare
- ◯ Other _____ (please specify)
- ◯ State compensation information
- ◯ Insurance information
- ◯ Information about criminal justice system

Please note any other comments or any unusual circumstances below:



Victim Support

29/30 Dame Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01)6798673

CONFIDENTIAL VISITOR REPORT FORM - NOVEMBER 1997

Branch Name: Hospital Project

Volunteer Name: _____

Visit Number: ◯ 1 ◯ 2 ◯ 3 Other: _____

Victim Details

1. No. of volunteers involved in this case: ☐

2. No. of victims involved in this case: ☐

3. Sex(es) of victims ☐ Male ☐ Female

4. Age(s) ☐ up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

5. Occupation (if known) _____ ◯ **Not known**

6. Living status: ◯ Alone ◯ Family ◯ Friends ◯ Other (please specify) _____

7. Date of crime: ☐☐ ☐☐ 9☐

8. Type of crime:
◯ Murder/Manslaughter ◯ Mugging ◯ Assault
◯ Threats/Intimidation ◯ Sexual Abuse ◯ Sexual Assault
◯ Burglary ◯ Aggrav.Burg'ry ◯ Theft (person)
◯ Theft (property) ◯ Other (please state) _____

9. Area of victim's residence or parish: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

10. Area where crime was committed: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

11. Physical injury? ◯ Yes ◯ No

12. Was crime reported to Gardai? ◯ Yes ◯ No

13. Did Gardai inform victim of Victim Support services? ◯ Yes ◯ No

Case Details

14. **Referral Source**

- ◯ Gardai
- ◯ Spouse
- ◯ Relative
- ◯ Other (please specify) _____
- ◯ Self (due to previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Self (no previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Friend
- ◯ Other organisation (please specify) _____

15. **Crime date** | **Referral to Victim Support** | **Referral to volunteer** | **1st visit date**

☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐

16. **How was the first visit established?**

- ◯ By telephone with a volunteer
- ◯ Unannounced visit
- ◯ By letter
- ◯ Other (please specify) _____

17. **How long was**

Contact/Visit 1 _____
Contact/Visit 2 _____
Contact/Visit 3 _____

18. **Distance from volunteer(s)' home(s):** **Volunteer 1** ☐ miles **Volunter 2** ☐ miles

19. **Did/do you have to provide information about other agencies for this victim?**
If so, which one(s)?

- ◯ Rape Crisis Centre
- ◯ Children's agency
- ◯ Counselling services
- ◯ Gardai/investigation procedures
- ◯ Other (I) _____
- ◯ Women's Aid
- ◯ Other Victim Support service
- ◯ St. Vincent de Paul
- ◯ Other (II) _____

20. **Did/do you have to liaise with Gardai for this victim:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

21. **Type of assistance provided (tick as many boxes as necessary)**

- ◯ Emotional Support
- ◯ Crime Prevention
- ◯ Social Welfare
- ◯ Other _____ (please describe)
- ◯ State compensation information
- ◯ Insurance information
- ◯ Information about criminal justice system

Please note any other comments or any unusual circumstances below:

Victim Support

29/30 Dame Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01)6798673

CONFIDENTIAL VISITOR REPORT FORM - NOVEMBER 1997

Branch Name: Tourist Victim Support

Volunteer Name: _____

Visit Number: ◯ 1 ◯ 2 ◯ 3 Other: _____

Victim Details

1. Nationality of victim(s) - please give numbers of each:

☐ British ☐ Italian ☐ Other _____

☐ U.S.A. ☐ French ☐ Other _____

2. No. of volunteers involved in this case: ☐

3. No. of victims involved in this case: ☐

4. Sex(es) of victims ☐ Male ☐ Female

5. Age(s) ☐ up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

6. Place of stay: ◯ Hotel ◯ B&B/Guesthouse ◯ Hostel ◯ Tent/Campsite ◯ Other (please specify)_____

7. Travelling status: ◯ Alone ◯ With family ◯ With friends ◯ Other (please specify) _____

8. Date of crime: ☐☐ ☐☐ 9☐

9. Crime: ◯ Murder/Manslaughter ◯ Mugging ◯ Assault ◯ Threats/Intimidation ◯ Sexual Abuse ◯ Sexual Assault ◯ Burglary ◯ Aggrav.Burg'ry ◯ Theft (person) ◯ Theft (property) ◯ Other (please state)_____

10. Area of victim's place of stay: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

11. Area where crime was committed: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

12. Physical injury? ◯ Yes ◯ No

13. Was crime reported to Gardai? ◯ Yes ◯ No

14. Did Gardai inform victim of Victim Support services? ◯ Yes ◯ No

Case Details

14. **Referral Source**

- ◯ Gardai
- ◯ Spouse
- ◯ Relative
- ◯ Friend
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ Self (due to standard hospital letter)
- ◯ Self (due to previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Self (no previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Other organisation(please state)

_____

15. **Crime date** | **Referral to co-ordinator** | **Referral to visitor** | **1st visit date**

☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐

16. **How was the first visit established?**

- ◯ By telephone (co-ordinator)
- ◯ By telephone (volunteer)
- ◯ Unannounced visit
- ◯ Other _____

17. **How long was**

Visit 1 _____
Visit 2 _____
Visit 3 _____

18. **Distance from volunteer(s)' home(s): Volunteer 1** ☐ miles **Volunteer 2** ☐ miles

19. **Did/do you have to provide information about other agencies for this victim?**

If so, which one(s)?

- ◯ Rape Crisis Centre
- ◯ Children's agency
- ◯ Counselling services
- ◯ Gardai/investigation procedures
- ◯ Other(I)_____
- ◯ Women's Aid
- ◯ Other Victim Support service
- ◯ St. Vincent de Paul
- ◯ Other (II)_____

20. **Did/do you have to liaise with Gardai for this victim:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

21. **Type of assistance provided (tick as many boxes as necessary)**

- ◯ Emotional Support
- ◯ Crime Prevention
- ◯ Social Welfare
- ◯ Information about hospital procedures
- ◯ Other _____ (please describe)
- ◯ State compensation information
- ◯ Insurance information
- ◯ Information about criminal justice system

Please note any other comments or any unusual circumstances below:

Victim Support

29/30 Dame Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01)6798673

CONFIDENTIAL VISITOR REPORT FORM - NOVEMBER 1997

Branch Name: Courts Branch

Volunteer Name: _____

Visit Number: ◯ 1 ◯ 2 ◯ 3 Other: _____

Victim Details

1. Who is the person(s) you are supporting in this case? Please give no's of each:

☐ Victim(s) ☐ Family of victim(s) ☐ Other

☐ Witness(es) ☐ Family of witness(es) _____

2. No. of volunteers involved in this case _____

3. No. of victims/witnesses involved in this case _____

4. Sex(es) of victims ☐ Male ☐ Female

5. Age(s) ☐ up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

6. Occupation (if known) _____ ◯ **Not known**

7. Living status: ◯ Alone ◯ Family ◯ Friends ◯ Other (please specify) _____

8. Date of crime: ☐☐ ☐☐ 9☐

9. Crime:

◯ Murder/Manslaughter ◯ Mugging ◯ Assault
◯ Threats/Intimidation ◯ Sexual Abuse ◯ Sexual Assault
◯ Burglary ◯ Aggrav.Burg'ry ◯ Theft (person)
◯ Theft (property) ◯ Other (please state) _____

10. Area of victim's residence: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

11. Area where crime was committed: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

12. Physical injury? ◯ Yes ◯ No

13. Was crime reported to Gardai? ◯ Yes ◯ No

14. Did Gardai inform victim of Victim Support services? ◯ Yes ◯ No

Case Details

15. **Referral Source**

- ◯ Gardai
- ◯ Spouse
- ◯ Relative
- ◯ Other (please specify) _____
- ◯ Self (due to previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Self (no previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Friend
- ◯ Other organisation(please state) _____

16. **Crime date** | **Referral to co-ordinator** | **Referral to volunteer** | **1st contact date**

☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐

17. **How was the first visit established?**

- ◯ By telephone with volunteer
- ◯ By telephone with co-ordinator
- ◯ Other (please specify)_____

18. **Distance from volunteer(s)' home(s):** **Volunteer 1** ☐ miles **Volunteer 2** ☐ miles

19. **Did/do you have to provide information about other agencies for this victim?**
If so, which one(s)?

- ◯ Rape Crisis Centre
- ◯ Children's agency
- ◯ Counselling services
- ◯ Gardai/investigation procedures
- ◯ Other(I)_____
- ◯ Women's Aid
- ◯ Other Victim Support service
- ◯ St. Vincent de Paul
- ◯ Other (II)_____

20. **Did/do you have to liaise with Gardai for this victim:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

21. **Did/do you have to liaise with anyone else for this victim:** ◯ Yes ◯ No
If so, who?_____

22. **Items stolen, if any:**

- ◯ money/credit cards
- ◯ clothing
- ◯ other _____
- ◯ passport
- ◯ camera/equipment
- ◯ other _____
- ◯ tickets
- ◯ car

23. **Type of assistance provided (tick as many boxes as necessary)**

- ◯ Emotional Support
- ◯ Crime Prevention
- ◯ Social Welfare
- ◯ Place to stay
- ◯ Ticket renewal
- ◯ Other _____
- ◯ State compensation information
- ◯ Insurance information
- ◯ Information about criminal justice system
- ◯ Passport renewal
- ◯ Clothing assistance

24. **Duration of visit:** ☐ Visit 1 ☐ Visit 2 ☐ Visit 3

Please note any other comments or any unusual circumstances below

Victim Support

29/30 Dame Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01)6798673

CONFIDENTIAL VISITOR REPORT FORM - NOVEMBER 1997

Branch Name: FMV Service

Volunteer Name: _____

Visit Number: ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 Other: _____

Victim Details

1. No. of volunteers involved in this visit: ☐

2. No. of victims involved in this visit: ☐

3. Sex(es) of victims ☐ Male ☐ Female

4. Age(s) ☐ up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

5. Occupation (if known) _____ ○ **Not known**

6. Living status: ○ Alone ○ Family ○ Friends ○ Other (please specify) _____

7. Date of crime: ☐☐ ☐☐ 9☐

8. Type of crime: ○ Murder/Manslaughter ○ Assault ○ Threats/Intimidation ○ Other (please state)_____

9. Area of victim's residence: ○ City Centre ○ Suburb ○ Town/Village ○ Rural

10. Area where crime was committed: ○ City Centre ○ Suburb ○ Town/Village ○ Rural

11. Relation to murder victim: ☐ Parents ☐ Siblings ☐ Children ☐ Friends ☐ Other (please specify) _____

12. Was crime reported to Gardai? ○ Yes ○ No

13. Did Gardai inform victim of Victim Support services? ○ Yes ○ No

Case Details

14. **Referral Source**

- ◯ Gardai
- ◯ Spouse
- ◯ Relative
- ◯ Friend
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ Self (due to standard letter)
- ◯ Self (due to previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Self (no previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Other organisation (please state) _____

15. **Crime date** | **Referral to co-ordinator** | **Referral to visitor** | **1st visit date**

☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐

16. **How was the first visit established?**

- ◯ By telephone (co-ordinator)
- ◯ By telephone (volunteer)
- ◯ Unannounced visit
- ◯ Other _____

17. **How long was**

Visit 1 _____
Visit 2 _____
Visit 3 _____

18. **Distance from volunteer(s)' home(s): Volunteer 1** ☐ miles **Volunteer 2** ☐ miles

19. **Did/do you have to provide information about other agencies for this victim?**
If so, which one(s)?

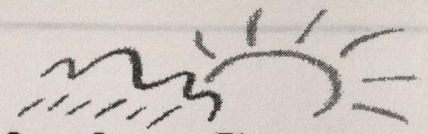
- ◯ Rape Crisis Centre
- ◯ Children's agency
- ◯ Counselling services
- ◯ Gardai/investigation procedures
- ◯ Other(I)_____
- ◯ Women's Aid
- ◯ Other Victim Support service
- ◯ St. Vincent de Paul
- ◯ Other (II)_____

20. **Did/do you have to liaise with Gardai for this victim:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

21. **Type of assistance provided (tick as many boxes as necessary)**

- ◯ Emotional Support
- ◯ Crime Prevention
- ◯ Social Welfare
- ◯ Coroner's procedures
- ◯ Other _____ (please describe)
- ◯ State compensation information
- ◯ Insurance information
- ◯ Information about criminal justice system

Please note any other comments or any unusual circumstances below:



Victim Support

29/30 Dame Street, Dublin 2 Tel: (01)6798673

CONFIDENTIAL VISITOR REPORT FORM - NOVEMBER 1997

Branch Name: Crime in the Workplace

Volunteer Name: _____

Visit Number: ◯ 1 ◯ 2 ◯ 3 Other: _____

Victim Details

1. No. of volunteers involved in this visit: ☐

2. No. of victims involved in this visit: ☐

3. Sex(es) of victims ☐ Male ☐ Female

4. Age(s) ☐ up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

5. Nature of business: _____ ◯ **Not known**

6. Living status: ◯ Alone ◯ Family ◯ Friends ◯ Other (please specify) _____

7. Date of crime: ☐☐ ☐☐ 9☐

8. Type of crime:
◯ Murder/Manslaughter ◯ Mugging ◯ Assault
◯ Threats/Intimidation ◯ Sexual Abuse ◯ Sexual Assault
◯ Burglary ◯ Aggrav.Burg'ry ◯ Theft (person)
◯ Theft (property) ◯ Other (please state) _____

9. Area of victim's residence: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

10. Area of workplace: ◯ City Centre ◯ Suburb ◯ Town/Village ◯ Rural

11. Physical injury? ◯ Yes ◯ No

12. Was crime reported to Gardai? ◯ Yes ◯ No

13. Did Gardai inform victim of Victim Support services? ◯ Yes ◯ No

Case Details

14. **Referral Source**

- ◯ Gardai
- ◯ Spouse
- ◯ Relative
- ◯ Work Colleague
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ Self (due to standard letter)
- ◯ Self (due to previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Self (no previous contact with V.S.)
- ◯ Other organisation(please state) _____

15. **Crime date** | **Referral to co-ordinator** | **Referral to visitor** | **1st visit date**

☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐☐

16. **How was the first visit established?**

- ◯ Unannounced visit
- ◯ By telephone (co-ordinator)
- ◯ By telephone (volunteer)
- ◯ Other _____

17. **How long was:**

Visit 1 _____
Visit 2 _____
Visit 3 _____

18. **Distance from volunteer(s)' home(s): Volunteer 1** ☐ miles **Volunteer 2** ☐ miles

19. **Did/do you have to provide information about other agencies for this victim?**
If so, which one(s)?

- ◯ Rape Crisis Centre
- ◯ Children's agency
- ◯ Counselling services
- ◯ Gardai/investigation procedures
- ◯ Other(I)_____
- ◯ Women's Aid
- ◯ Other Victim Support service
- ◯ St. Vincent de Paul
- ◯ Other (II)_____

20. **Did/do you have to liaise with Gardai for this case:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

21. **Did/do you have to liaise with management for this case:** ◯ Yes ◯ No

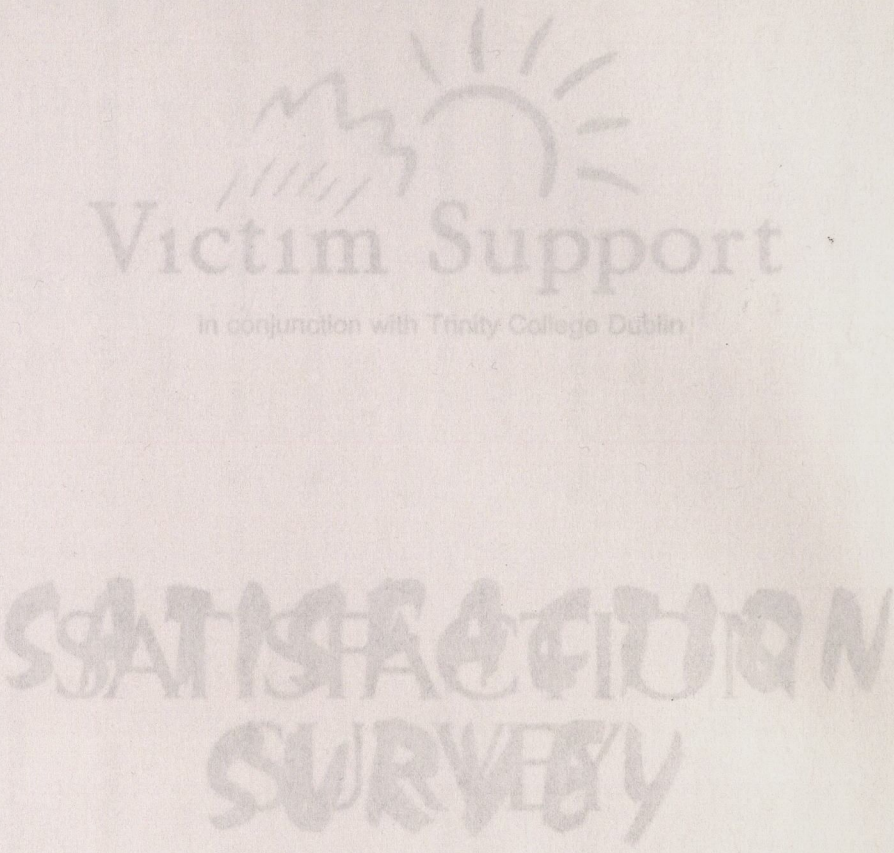
22. **Type of assistance provided (tick as many boxes as necessary)**

- ◯ Emotional Support
- ◯ Crime Prevention
- ◯ Social Welfare
- ◯ Other _____ (please describe)
- ◯ State compensation information
- ◯ Insurance information
- ◯ Information about criminal justice system

Please note any other comments or any unusual circumstances below:

APPENDIX 2

Service Users' Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire





Victim Support

in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin

SATISFACTION SURVEY

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please answer each question as accurately as you can remember. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

SECTION 1 - THE VISIT

1. **Victim Support visited you after the crime. Please tell us the date of the visit:**

day month year ❑ cannot remember

2. **How many visits have you received to date?** _____

3. **If you reported the crime to the Gardaí, how many days after reporting it did you hear from Victim Support?** PLEASE CIRCLE ◯

a) _____days b) 1 - 2 weeks c) 3 - 4 weeks d) over 1 month later

e) did not report crime to Gardaí.

4. **Did the Gardaí inform you of the Victim Support service?**
a) Yes b) No

5. **Had you ever heard of Victim Support before the crime?**
a) Yes b) No

6. **In terms of timing after the crime, would it have been better if they had visited:**
a) Some days sooner b) Some days later c) It was about right
Why?_____

7. **Approximately what time of the day did the volunteer(s) call?**

_____:_____am/pm
hour minute

8. **Was this a convenient time for you?** ❑ Yes ❑ No
If not, why not?_____

9. **How were you first contacted by Victim Support?** PLEASE CIRCLE ◯
❑ Phone ❑ Letter ❑ Unannounced visit to your home

visit you?

❑ Yes ❑ No

11. **Would you prefer to be informed beforehand that a volunteer would be calling?**

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Does not make a difference

12. **Did the volunteer(s) identify themselves clearly?**

❑ Yes ❑ No

13. **Did they show an identification card?**

❑ Yes ❑ No

14. **Was your initial reaction to the call:**

❑ Positive ❑ Negative ❑ Neither positive nor negative

15. **How many volunteers called out?**_____

16. **Was the number of volunteers appropriate?**

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ No opinion

17. **Were/was the volunteer(s) who called to see you:**

❑ Male ❑ Female ❑ 1 male, 1 female

18. **Was this satisfactory?**

❑ Yes ❑ No

19. **Approx. how old was/were the volunteer(s) who called to see you?**

❑ Under 20 ❑ 21-40 ❑ 41-60 ❑ Over 60

20. **Would you have preferred the volunteer(s) to be**

❑ Younger ❑ Older ❑ It did not matter

1. ***How satisfied were you with the overall service?*** (Please tick)

Very Satisfied ❑ Satisfied ❑ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ❑
Dissatisfied ❑ Very dissatisfied ❑

2. **Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements by ticking the appropriate response:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I found the service useful					
The volunteer(s) appeared understanding of my situation					
The volunteer(s) gave me enough time to discuss my situation					
I felt that I could talk to them					
I found talking to them helpful					
The volunteer(s) listened attentively to what I told them					
The volunteer(s) were competent in handling my fears, needs or questions					
The volunteer(s) were courteous and helpful					
The volunteer(s) respected my rights as a victim of crime					
The volunteer(s) explained to me clearly why they were there					

(You may tick more than one box)

- ❑ Friendly
- ❑ Helpful
- ❑ Warm
- ❑ Cold
- ❑ Polite
- ❑ Concerned
- ❑ Rude
- ❑ Professional
- ❑ Rushed
- ❑ Caring

4. **How did you feel after the visit from Victim Support?** PLEASE CIRCLE ◯
a) Very much better b) Slightly better c) No different d) Worse

5. **Did you need any information from them about:**
(You may tick more than one box)

- ❑ The Gardaí
- ❑ The Legal System
- ❑ Insurance
- ❑ Compensation
- ❑ Social Welfare
- ❑ Other Organisations
- ❑ Other (Please Specify)_____

6. **Were they able to provide any information about those services?**
❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ I did not need any information

7. **If you were given information, was it helpful to you?**
❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ I was not given any information

8. **Did you need anything practical done after the crime**
(You may tick more than one box)

- ❑ Fixing locks / windows / doors
- ❑ New security
- ❑ Help with insurance forms
- ❑ Other: _____

9. **Were the volunteers able to assist you?** PLEASE CIRCLE ◯
a) Yes b) No c) I did not need any practical assistance

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ No opinion

11. **Did you feel you needed practical support after the crime?**

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ No opinion

12. **Would you have looked for emotional or practical support if Victim Support had not contacted you?**

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ No opinion

If not, why not?_____

13. **How do you feel the visit has made a difference in helping you to cope emotionally?**

❑ Very big difference ❑ Some difference ❑ No difference ❑ Worse

14. **How many visits did you receive from Victim Support?**_____

15. **Would you have preferred:**

❑ Less ❑ More ❑ I was satisfied with what I received

16. **Do you think you would contact Victim Support again in the future?**

❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Maybe

17. **Would you recommend Victim Support to a close friend or family member who experienced the same crime?**

❑ Yes ❑ No

18. **Could you suggest three areas where Victim Support could improve its service to victims of crime?**

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. **You were recently the victim of a crime. What was the crime?**
(You may tick more than one box)

- ❑ Murder/Manslaughter (family of victim)
- ❑ Assault
- ❑ Attempted assault
- ❑ Mugging
- ❑ Attempted mugging
- ❑ Sexual assault as an adult
- ❑ Attempted sexual assault as an adult
- ❑ Sexual Abuse as a child
- ❑ Domestic Violence
- ❑ Burglary/unlawful entry where you actually saw the offender
- ❑ Burglary/unlawful entry where you did not actually see the offender
- ❑ Theft from your person
- ❑ Theft of your property
- ❑ Threats/Intimidation
- ❑ Other (please state) _____

2. Date of crime:_____

3. Were you physically injured? ❑ Yes ❑ No

4. Did you report the crime to the Gardaí ❑ Yes ❑ No

5. How satisfied were you with the way the Gardaí dealt with your situation?
(Please tick)

Very Satisfied ❑ Satisfied ❑ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ❑
Dissatisfied ❑ Very dissatisfied ❑

SECTION 4 DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

1. Are you: ❑ Male ❑ Female

2. Your age: ❑ Up to 16 ❑ 17-25 ❑ 26-35 ❑ 36-45
❑ 46-55 ❑ 56-65 ❑ 66+

3. Your Occupation:_____
(If retired, please tell us your previous occupation)

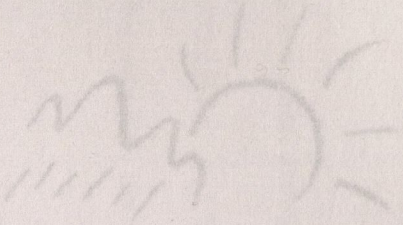
4. Marital Status: ❑ Single ❑ Married/living with partner
❑ Separated/Divorced/Widowed

5. Living Status: ❑ Alone ❑ With partner/husband only ❑ With family
❑ With friends ❑ Other (please specify) _____

Your valued participation in this survey will help Victim Support to improve its service to victims of crime, and has been much appreciated. Thank you!

APPENDIX 3

Crime Impact Survey Questionnaire



Victim Support

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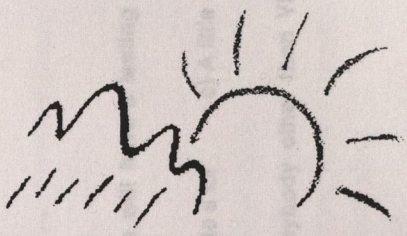
Crime Impact Survey



Victim Support

in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin

Crime Impact Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please answer each question as accurately as you can remember. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 - 15 minutes to complete.

Section 1 - Crime Details

Please tick the box or boxes that most closely describes your experience. (You may tick more than one box)

- ☐ Murder/Manslaughter (for family of victim)
- ☐ Assault
- ☐ Attempted assault
- ☐ Mugging
- ☐ Attempted mugging
- ☐ Sexual Assault
- ☐ Attempted sexual assault
- ☐ Sexual Abuse
- ☐ Domestic Violence
- ☐ Burglary/unlawful entry where you actually saw the offender
- ☐ Burglary/unlawful entry where you did not actually see the offender
- ☐ Theft of something from your person
- ☐ Theft of your property
- ☐ Threats/Intimidation
- ☐ Other _____

Date of crime: _____

Were you injured as a result of the crime? YES ☐ NO ☐

Items stolen, if any_____

Value/Loss: £ _____

Did you know the offender? YES ☐ NO ☐

Was the crime reported to the Gardai? YES ☐ NO ☐

Section 2 - The Effects of Crime

We would like to know how you were affected by your experience of crime. Please CIRCLE the answer that most closely describes how you felt.

1. The first few days after the crime, were you affected (PLEASE CIRCLE)

a) Very much **b)** Quite a lot **c)** A little **d)** Not at all

2. 3-6 weeks after the crime, were you still affected (PLEASE CIRCLE)

a) Very much **b)** Quite a lot **c)** A little **d)** Not at all

3. When did you feel at your lowest point? Please tick the appropriate response:

- ☐ Immediately
- ☐ A few hours later
- ☐ Next day
- ☐ A few days later
- ☐ A week later
- ☐ 1 week - 1 month later
- ☐ Over 1 month later
- ☐ No lowest point

4. Do you think this crime will have a lasting effect on your life in the future? PLEASE CIRCLE

a) Very much **b)** Quite a lot **c)** A little **d)** Not at all

5. Have you spoken to anybody other than Victim Support about the crime? PLEASE CIRCLE

a) Yes **b)** No

5a. If yes, who did you speak to?

a) Partner **b)** Family member **c)** Close friend **d)** Acquaintance **e)** Other

5b. Were they sympathetic?

a) Yes **b)** No

6. ***Have you noticed any of the following effects at any time*** **since the crime occurred up until today? You may tick as many boxes as required.**

- ☐ Feeling angry
- ☐ Difficulty sleeping
- ☐ Unsettled or uneasy
- ☐ Feeling dazed, confused, or unreal
- ☐ Feeling depressed
- ☐ Feeling frightened
- ☐ Feeling panicky
- ☐ Shaking, shivering
- ☐ Feeling contaminated/dirty
- ☐ Afraid to go out
- ☐ Feeling helpless/vulnerable
- ☐ Afraid to enter house/room
- ☐ Unable to do ordinary tasks
- ☐ Crying or on verge of tears
- ☐ Loss of appetite
- ☐ Feeling weak, loss of strength
- ☐ Not wanting to be alone
- ☐ Loss of interest in work/hobbies
- ☐ Feeling/being sick
- ☐ Afraid to stay in house
- ☐ Feeling guilty / "your fault"
- ☐ Headaches/feeling ill generally
- ☐ Constantly thinking about event
- ☐ Avoiding thinking about event
- ☐ Feeling worried or anxious
- ☐ Nightmares
- ☐ Feeling under stress, tense, edgy
- ☐ Feeling irritated/quarrelsome

7. **How afraid are you of another crime happening to you in the future? PLEASE CIRCLE ◯**

a) Very afraid **b)** Quite afraid **c)** A little afraid **d)** Not at all afraid

8. **How safe do you feel in general walking alone after dark? PLEASE CIRCLE**

a) Very safe **b)** Quite safe **c)** Neither safe/unsafe **d)** A bit unsafe **e)** Very unsafe

9. **How safe do you feel in your home at night? PLEASE CIRCLE**

a) Very safe **b)** Quite safe **c)** Neither safe/unsafe **d)** A bit unsafe **e)** Very unsafe

10. **Please indicate how worried you are about the following by ticking the boxes:**

		V.worried	Worried	Not worried	No opinion
a)	Burglary	☐	☐	☐	☐
b)	Sexual Assault	☐	☐	☐	☐
c)	Mugging	☐	☐	☐	☐
d)	Car theft	☐	☐	☐	☐
e)	Theft from car	☐	☐	☐	☐
f)	Harassment	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. **How worried are you in general about bad things happening to you?**

V.worried	Worried	Not worried	No opinion
☐	☐	☐	☐

12. **Have you changed your previous lifestyle in any way as a result of the crime:**

	Yes	No
Go out less during the day	☐	☐
Go out less at night	☐	☐
Avoid going out alone	☐	☐
Avoid certain certain sorts of people	☐	☐
Avoid certain places and events	☐	☐
Avoid going out on foot/using public transport	☐	☐
Carry a weapon or personal alarm	☐	☐
Go to self-defence classes	☐	☐
Be more vigilant about security/crime prevention	☐	☐

1. Please CIRCLE the appropriate response to each question.

Have you recently:

Been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?*	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Lost much sleep over worry?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?*	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Felt capable of making decisions about things?	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Felt constantly under strain?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?*	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Been able to face up to your problems?*	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Been feeling unhappy and depressed?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Been losing confidence in yourself?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?*	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual

Please think back to the time immediately before the crime took place.

2. How stressful was your life at that time? PLEASE CIRCLE

a) Very stressful **b)** Quite stressful **c)** A little stressful **d)** Not at all stressful

3. Had you experienced any changes or major events in any of the following:

a) lifestyle	YES ☐	NO ☐
b) finances	YES ☐	NO ☐
c) work	YES ☐	NO ☐
d) family	YES ☐	NO ☐
e) relationships with others	YES ☐	NO ☐
f) health	YES ☐	NO ☐

4. What were the most stressful experiences, if any, in the 12 months leading up to the crime date?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Section 4 - Coping with Stressful Events

We are interested in how people respond when they confront difficult or stressful events in their lives. Please think about what you usually do when you are under a lot of stress.

Then respond to each of the following items by choosing one number for each, using the response choices listed below:

1 = I usually don't do this at all
2 = I usually do this a little bit
3 = I usually do this a medium amount
4 = I usually do this a lot

	Answer (1/2/3/4)
1. I take additional action to try and get rid of the problem	☐
2. I try to come up with a strategy about what to do	☐
3. I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this	☐
4. I force myself to wait for the right time to do something	☐
5. I ask people who have had similar experiences what they did	☐
6. I talk to someone about how I feel	☐
7. I look for something good in what is happening	☐
8. I learn to live with it	☐
9. I seek God's help	☐
10. I get upset and let my emotions out	☐
11. I refuse to believe that it has happened	☐
12. I give up the attempt to get what I want	☐
13. I turn to work or other substitute activities to take my mind off things	☐
14. I drink alcohol or take drugs in order to think about it less	☐

Section 5 - The Criminal Justice System

Please tell us your views about the Criminal Justice System and its treatment of offenders by CIRCLING the appropriate responses. ◯

1. **Were you satisfied with the way the Gardai have handled your case? PLEASE CIRCLE**

   a) Very much **b)** Quite a lot **c)** A little **d)** Not at all

   If not, why not? _____

2. **Do you feel satisfied that you are being kept informed about the progress of your case? PLEASE CIRCLE**

   a) Very much **b)** Quite a lot **c)** A little **d)** Not at all

3. **Taking everything into account, would you say the Gardai in your area do a good or poor job? PLEASE CIRCLE**

   a) Very good **b)** Quite good **c)** Quite bad **d)** Very bad **e)** No opinion

4. **To your knowledge, has the offender(s) been caught?**

   a) Yes **b)** No

   4a) If not, how likely do you think it is that an offender will eventually be caught?

   a) Very likely **b)** Quite likely **c)** A little **d)** Not at all likely

5. **In the Irish criminal justice system, do you feel that offenders are punished fairly?**

   a) Yes **b)** No **c)** Don't know

6. **Looking back, was there anything that you could have done to prevent the crime from happening?**

   a) Yes **b)** No **c)** Don't know

Section 6 - Crime Prevalance

We would like to know if you have any previous experiences of crime. Please CIRCLE the appropriate response.

1. **Have you been the victim of a crime before?** **a)** Yes **b)** No

2. **Please specify the crime(s) that you have experienced and the number of times you have experienced them. You may tick more than one box.**

Crime	No. of experiences
☐ Murder/Manslaughter (family of victim)	
☐ Assault	
☐ Attempted assault	
☐ Mugging	
☐ Attempted mugging	
☐ Sexual Assault	
☐ Attempted sexual assault	
☐ Sexual Abuse	
☐ Domestic Violence	
☐ Burglary/unlawful entry where you actually saw the offender	
☐ Burglary/unlawful entry where you did not actually see the offender	
☐ Attempted burglary	
☐ Theft of something from your person	
☐ Theft of your property	
☐ Threats/Intimidation	
☐ Other _____	

3. **What do you think your chances are of being victimised again in the future? PLEASE CIRCLE**

a) Certain **b)** Likely **c)** Not at all likely **d)** No opinion

4. **How do you think the crime levels in general compare to those of 5 years ago? PLEASE CIRCLE**

a) Much increased **b)** A little increased **c)** About the same

d) A little decreased **e)** Much decreased

5. **How do you think the crime levels *in your area* compare to those of 5 years ago?**

a) Much increased **b)** A little increased **c)** About the same

d) A little decreased **e)** Much decreased

Section 7 - Demographic Details

For purposes of statistics, please advise us of the following details:

1. **Sex:** ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. **Age:** ☐ Up to 16 ☐ 17-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ 66+

3. **Occupation:** _____
(If retired, please tell us your previous occupation)

4. **Education:**
☐ Primary level
☐ Secondary level - Intermediate Certificate
☐ Secondary level - Leaving Certificate
☐ Third level - college - certificate
☐ Third level - college - diploma
☐ Third level - university - degree

5. **Marital Status:**
☐ Single
☐ Married/Living with partner
☐ Separated/Divorced
☐ Widowed

6. **Living status:**
☐ Alone ☐ With partner/husband only
☐ With family ☐ With friends
☐ Other (please specify) _____

7. **Which newspaper do you read most often?**_____

8. **How often do you buy/read it?**
☐ Daily ☐ Regularly
☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

If you wish to make any additional comments on crime in Ireland or your personal experience, please use the additional page overleaf. We look forward to reading any comments you choose to make.

Your valued participation in this study will help Victim Support to improve its service to all victims of crime, and has been much appreciated.

Thank you!

APPENDIX 4

Diagnostic Criteria for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (DSM-IV)

Persons are diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) when:

A. The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:
   (1) The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.
   (2) The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror. Note: In children, this may be expressed instead by disorganised or agitated behaviour.

B. The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:
   (1) Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. Note: In young children, repetitive play may occur in which themes or aspects of the trauma are expressed.
   (2) Recurrent distressing dreams of the event. Note: In children, there may be frightening dreams without recognisable content.
   (3) Acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring (includes a sense of reliving the experience, illusions, hallucinations and dissociative flashback episodes, including those that occur on awakening or when intoxicated). Note: In young children, trauma-specific re-enactment may occur.

(4) Intense psychological distress at exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

(5) Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues that symbolise or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event.

C. Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

(1) Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations associated with the trauma.

(2) Efforts to avoid activities, places or people that arouse recollections of the trauma.

(3) Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma.

(4) Markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities.

(5) Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others.

(6) Restricted range of affect (e.g. unable to have loving feelings).

(7) Sense of a foreshortened future (e.g. does not expect to have a career, marriage, children or a normal life span).

D. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated b two (or more) of the following:

(1) Difficulty falling or staying asleep.

(2) Irritability or outbursts of anger.

(3) Difficulty concentrating.

(4) Hypervigilance.

(5) Exaggerated startle response.

E. Duration of the disturbance (symptoms in criteria B, C and D) is more than one month.

F. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

Specify if:

Acute: If duration of symptoms is less than 3 months.

Chronic: If duration of symptoms is 3 months or more.

Specify if:

With delayed onset: If onset of symptoms is at least 6 months after the stressor.

APPENDIX 5

Interactions between the five measures of the dependent variable, effect of crime (Crime Impact Survey)

Analysis 1:

ANOVA between "Are Offenders Punished Fairly?" (Cognitive Effect) and General Effects, Emotional Effects, Behavioural Effects and Mental Health Effects.

Analysis 2:

Correlations between the five measures of effect of crime: General, emotional, behavioural, cognitive and mental health effects.

Oneway: Are offenders punished fairly V other measures of DV

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Immediate effect	Between Groups	4.435	2	2.218	2.812	.064
	Within Groups	94.638	120	.789		
	Total	99.073	122			
3-6 weeks effect	Between Groups	2.450	2	1.225	1.158	.318
	Within Groups	124.839	118	1.058		
	Total	127.289	120			
Crime lasting effect?	Between Groups	2.946	2	1.473	1.128	.327
	Within Groups	158.021	121	1.306		
	Total	160.968	123			
No of emotional symptoms ticked	Between Groups	103.058	2	51.529	1.495	.229
	Within Groups	3998.925	116	34.473		
	Total	4101.983	118			
Total behavioural changes ticked	Between Groups	6.653	2	3.327	.599	.552
	Within Groups	399.533	72	5.549		
	Total	406.187	74			
Score on GHQ - higher indicates illness	Between Groups	229.623	2	114.812	1.629	.200
	Within Groups	8457.173	120	70.476		
	Total	8686.797	122			

Correlations

Correlations

		Immediate effect	3-6 weeks effect	Crime lasting effect?	No of emotional symptoms ticked
Immediate effect	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.729**	.551**	-.474**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	130	126	129	123
3-6 weeks effect	Pearson Correlation	.729**	1.000	.754**	-.629**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	126	128	127	121
Crime lasting effect?	Pearson Correlation	.551**	.754**	1.000	-.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	129	127	131	124
No of emotional symptoms ticked	Pearson Correlation	-.474**	-.629**	-.620**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	123	121	124	125
Afraid of another crime in future?	Pearson Correlation	.515**	.535**	.561**	-.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	126	123	126	121
Safe walking in dark?	Pearson Correlation	-.285**	-.268**	-.255**	.178
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.003	.005	.055
	N	120	118	121	117
How safe in home?	Pearson Correlation	-.362**	-.381**	-.373**	.346**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	126	124	127	122
Total worry score	Pearson Correlation	-.162	-.122	-.081	.199*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.065	.171	.356	.026
	N	130	128	131	125
Total behavioural changes ticked	Pearson Correlation	-.477**	-.582**	-.616**	.644**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	78	77	80	76
Score on GHQ - higher indicates illness	Pearson Correlation	-.423**	-.534**	-.455**	.601**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	127	125	128	123
Do Gdai do a good job recoded	Pearson Correlation	-.089	-.142	-.110	.180
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.378	.157	.271	.074
	N	101	100	102	99
Is it likely that offender will be caught	Pearson Correlation	-.015	.027	.025	-.196
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.891	.798	.814	.064
	N	92	90	94	90
General crime levels to 5yr ago?	Pearson Correlation	.257**	.235**	.164	-.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.009	.067	.277
	N	125	124	126	121
Area crime levels to 5yr ago	Pearson Correlation	.224*	.232*	.212*	-.195*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.011	.019	.035
	N	121	120	122	117

Correlations

		Afraid of another crime in future?	Safe walking in dark?	How safe in home?	Total worry score
Immediate effect	Pearson Correlation	.515**	-.285**	-.362**	-.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.000	.065
	N	126	120	126	130
3-6 weeks effect	Pearson Correlation	.535**	-.268**	-.381**	-.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.000	.171
	N	123	118	124	128
Crime lasting effect?	Pearson Correlation	.561**	-.255**	-.373**	-.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.000	.356
	N	126	121	127	131
No of emotional symptoms ticked	Pearson Correlation	-.507**	.178	.346**	.199*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.055	.000	.026
	N	121	117	122	125
Afraid of another crime in future?	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-.366**	-.310**	-.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.001
	N	127	120	125	127
Safe walking in dark?	Pearson Correlation	-.366**	1.000	.234**	.243**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.010	.007
	N	120	122	121	122
How safe in home?	Pearson Correlation	-.310**	.234**	1.000	.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.010	.	.085
	N	125	121	128	128
Total worry score	Pearson Correlation	-.293**	.243**	.153	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.007	.085	.
	N	127	122	128	132
Total behavioural changes ticked	Pearson Correlation	-.509**	.351**	.260*	.252*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.020	.024
	N	78	77	80	80
Score on GHQ - higher indicates illness	Pearson Correlation	-.357**	.046	.312**	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.615	.000	.273
	N	124	121	125	129
Do Gdai do a good job recoded	Pearson Correlation	-.099	-.145	.067	.125
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.325	.156	.504	.209
	N	100	97	101	103
Is it likely that offender will be caught	Pearson Correlation	-.068	.311**	.017	.227*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.522	.003	.873	.028
	N	91	88	92	94
General crime levels to 5yr ago?	Pearson Correlation	.048	-.251**	-.138	-.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.593	.006	.127	.994
	N	124	120	124	127
Area crime levels to 5yr ago	Pearson Correlation	.111	-.039	-.201*	-.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.226	.676	.028	.923
	N	120	116	120	123

Correlations

		Total behavioural changes ticked	Score on GHQ - higher indicates illness	Do Gdai do a good job recoded	Is it likely tha offender will b caught
Immediate effect	Pearson Correlation	-.477**	-.423**	-.089	-.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.378	.89
	N	78	127	101	9
3-6 weeks effect	Pearson Correlation	-.582**	-.534**	-.142	.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.157	.79
	N	77	125	100	9
Crime lasting effect?	Pearson Correlation	-.616**	-.455**	-.110	.02
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.271	.81
	N	80	128	102	9
No of emotional symptoms ticked	Pearson Correlation	.644**	.601**	.180	-.19
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.074	.06
	N	76	123	99	9
Afraid of another crime in future?	Pearson Correlation	-.509**	-.357**	-.099	-.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.325	.52
	N	78	124	100	9
Safe walking in dark?	Pearson Correlation	.351**	.046	-.145	.31
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.615	.156	.00
	N	77	121	97	8
How safe in home?	Pearson Correlation	.260*	.312**	.067	.01
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.000	.504	.87
	N	80	125	101	9
Total worry score	Pearson Correlation	.252*	.097	.125	.22
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.273	.209	.02
	N	80	129	103	9
Total behavioural changes ticked	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.535**	.211	-.04
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.096	.73
	N	80	78	63	5
Score on GHQ - higher indicates illness	Pearson Correlation	.535**	1.000	.162	-.06
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.105	.54
	N	78	129	101	9
Do Gdai do a good job recoded	Pearson Correlation	.211	.162	1.000	.09
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.096	.105	.	.45
	N	63	101	103	7
Is it likely that offender will be caught	Pearson Correlation	-.046	-.064	.090	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.730	.546	.451	
	N	58	92	73	9
General crime levels to 5yr ago?	Pearson Correlation	-.280*	-.008	-.009	-.03
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.926	.929	.76
	N	77	125	101	9
Area crime levels to 5yr ago	Pearson Correlation	-.363**	-.073	-.035	.07
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.425	.732	.48
	N	75	121	99	8

Correlations

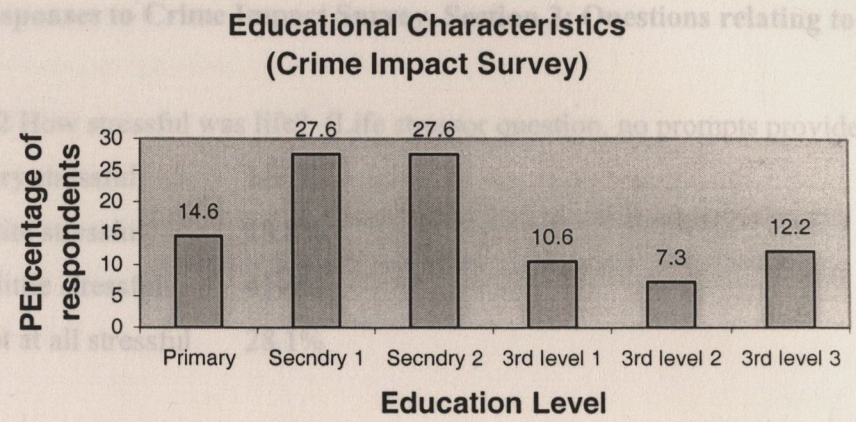
		General crime levels to 5yr ago?	Area crime levels to 5yr ago
Immediate effect	Pearson Correlation	.257**	.224*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.014
	N	125	121
3-6 weeks effect	Pearson Correlation	.235**	.232*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.011
	N	124	120
Crime lasting effect?	Pearson Correlation	.164	.212*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	.019
	N	126	122
No of emotional symptoms ticked	Pearson Correlation	-.100	-.195*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.277	.035
	N	121	117
Afraid of another crime in future?	Pearson Correlation	.048	.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.593	.226
	N	124	120
Safe walking in dark?	Pearson Correlation	-.251**	-.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.676
	N	120	116
How safe in home?	Pearson Correlation	-.138	-.201*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	.028
	N	124	120
Total worry score	Pearson Correlation	-.001	-.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.994	.923
	N	127	123
Total behavioural changes ticked	Pearson Correlation	-.280*	-.363**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.001
	N	77	75
Score on GHQ - higher indicates illness	Pearson Correlation	-.008	-.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.926	.425
	N	125	121
Do Gdai do a good job recoded	Pearson Correlation	-.009	-.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.929	.732
	N	101	99
Is it likely that offender will be caught	Pearson Correlation	-.032	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.761	.480
	N	92	88
General crime levels to 5yr ago?	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.372**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	127	123
Area crime levels to 5yr ago	Pearson Correlation	.372**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	123	123

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

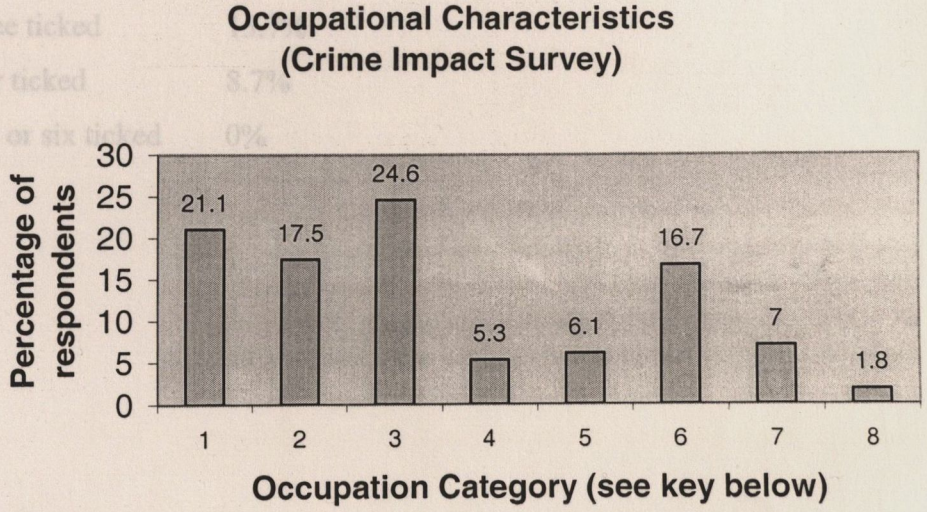
APPENDIX 6

Educational and Occupational Characteristics of Subjects in Crime Impact Survey



Education levels of subjects

Primary =	Primary Level
Secondary 1 =	Secondary level – Intermediate/Junior Certificate
Secondary 2 =	Secondary level – Leaving Certificate
3rd level 1 =	Third Level Certificate
3rd level 2 =	Third Level Diploma
3rd level 3 =	Third Level Degree



Occupation Levels of Subjects

1 = Skilled, managerial, professional
2 = Semi-skilled, office workers
3 = Manual
4 = Civil service, Gardai, nurses, other specialised skilled
5 = Still in education
6 = Homemaker/carer
7 = Not at work
8 = Other

APPENDIX 7

Responses to Crime Impact Survey, Section 3: Questions relating to stress

Q.2 How stressful was life? (Life stressor question, no prompts provided)

Very stressful	11.7%
Quite stressful	18.8%
A little stressful	41.4%
Not at all stressful	28.1%

Q.3 Had respondent experienced any changes or major events in lifestyle, finances, work, family relationships or health? (Aforementioned prompts provided, responses re-coded in to "number of stressful experiences ticked")

None ticked	28.7%
One ticked	29.6%
Two ticked	17.4%
Three ticked	15.7%
Four ticked	8.7%
Five or six ticked	0%

Responses to Crime Impact Survey, Section 3:
Questions relating to media use

Newspaper type read by sample:

Tabloid	16.7%
Broadsheet	45.3%
Special interest	4.1%
Evening Herald	33.1%
Local	0.8%

How often it was bought/read:

Daily	44%
Regularly	28%
Occasionally	21.6%
Rarely	3.2%
Never	3.2%