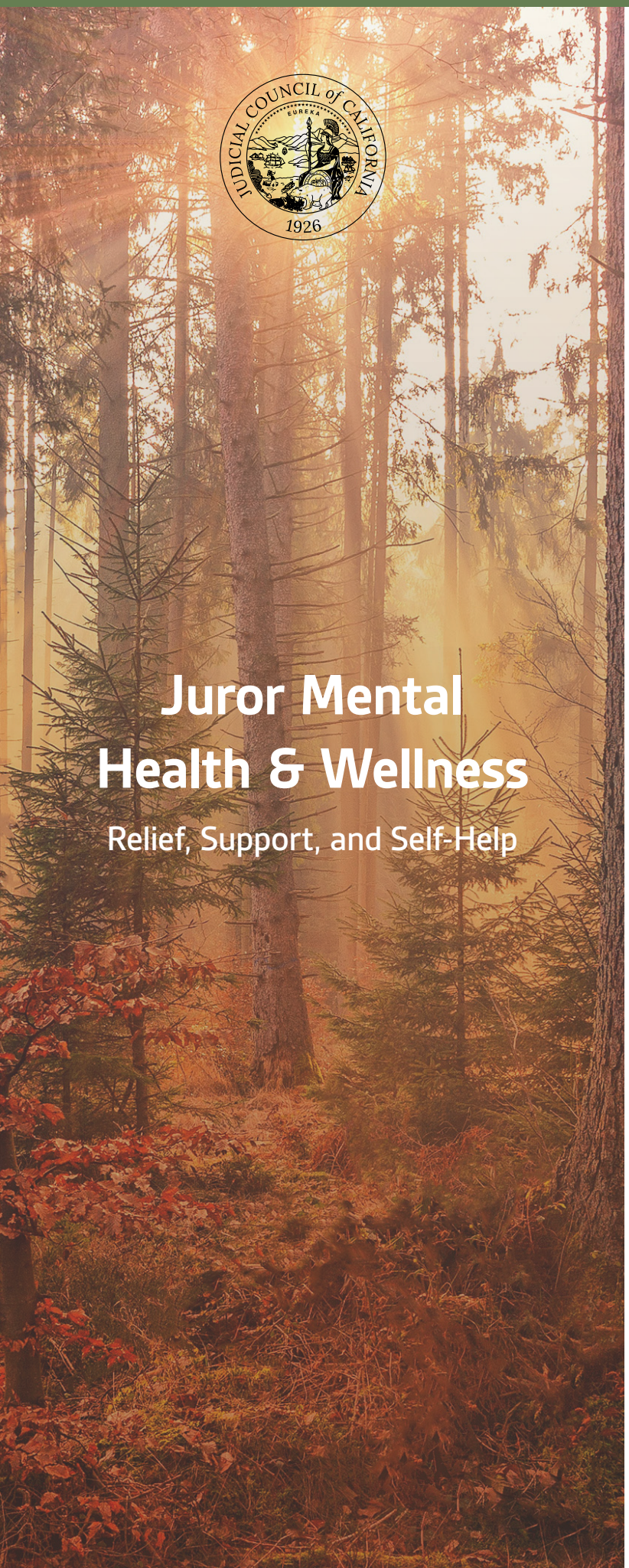

Juror Mental Health & Wellness

Relief, Support, and Self-Help

Thank you for serving your community.

Being on a jury is a rewarding experience that in some cases may be quite demanding. You were asked to listen to testimony and to examine facts and evidence. Coming to a decision is often not easy, but your participation is appreciated.

Because serving on a jury is not a common experience, doing so may cause some jurors to have temporary symptoms of distress. Your jury service probably disrupted your work and home schedule. It is possible you were asked to hear graphic testimony or review graphic evidence or images, and people react differently to being exposed to such materials.

Additionally, to be affected by crime and violence can be very unsettling, even when the crime is not directed against you personally. It may affect how you view your community or your own safety. If you have been a victim of a crime, the jury experience may bring up memories or reactions related to your own victimization. You are not alone. This is a very normal reaction to being exposed to the victimization of others.

Although not everyone feels anxiety or increased stress after jury duty, it may be helpful to be aware of the symptoms if they arise.

Some temporary signs of distress following jury duty include:

- Anxiety or depression
- Sleep or appetite changes
- Physical problems, such as headaches, muscle tension, stomachaches, joint pain, low or no energy, and similar symptoms
- Increased drug or alcohol use
- Second-guessing your verdict or dwelling on the case
- Moodiness or feelings of guilt or fear
- Trouble dealing with issues or topics related to the case
- A desire to be by yourself
- Diminished interest in activities that used to interest you
- Decreased concentration or memory problems, especially for simple tasks

Symptoms may come and go, occurring hours, days, or even months later, but typically they will eventually dissipate altogether. To help yourself, it is important to admit any symptoms you may have and deal with any unpleasant reactions.

Coping Techniques After Serving on a Jury

1. Before you leave the court, you may wish to ask your fellow jurors for their names and contact information. Sometimes it is helpful to talk to people who went through the experience with you. This can help you to remember that you were part of a group (jury) and are not alone and you are having a normal response to an unusual experience.
2. Talk to family members and friends. One of the best ways to put your jury duty experience in perspective is to discuss your feelings and reactions with loved ones and friends. You may also want to talk with your health professional or a religious leader you trust.
3. Also be aware that you are under no obligation to discuss the trial with anyone, including the media. You do not have to discuss your jury's decision until you are ready, or at all if you don't want to.
4. Stick to your normal daily routines. It is important to return to your regular schedule. Don't isolate yourself unnecessarily.
5. Relax with deep breathing. Start by breathing in slowly through your nose and then out through your mouth. Slow your thoughts down and think about a relaxing scene. Continue deep breathing until you feel more relaxed.
6. You can deal with signs of distress by cutting down on alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine. These substances can increase anxiety and fatigue and make sleep problems worse.
7. Take care of your health with good nutrition, adequate rest, and plenty of water.
8. Increase your daily exercise, such as yoga, calisthenics, or tai chi. Moderate exercise helps your body process stress hormones and may ease stress-induced reactions. However, do not exercise just before bedtime.
9. Cope with sleep problems by doing boring activities before bedtime, listening to relaxing music, and decreasing caffeine consumption in the evening and at night.
10. Use other coping skills that have worked for you in the past, even if they may have been for unrelated situations.
11. Most important, be patient with yourself. Stress reactions can come and go and sometimes may take you by surprise. Everyone heals at their own pace; do not put yourself on an artificial timeline to heal.

Final Thoughts

- Remember that jury service is an important responsibility of good citizens.
- Resist indulging in negative thoughts about the verdict.
- No matter what others think about the verdict, your opinion is the only one that matters for you and your health.
- You don't have to prove yourself to anyone.
- It takes a lot of courage to serve on a jury. Some cases are very violent, brutal, and hard to deal with. But the case is now over, and it is important for you to get on with your life.
- If you are fearful of retaliation or if you are threatened after the trial, tell the court or law enforcement immediately.
- If signs of distress persist for two weeks after the jury service has ended, consider contacting your physician, therapist, counselor, or other medical or mental health professional.

Additional Assistance

For local resources, you may wish to contact your county's Behavioral Health Agency. Contact information is available on the DHCS website. You can also search online for other community resources in your area at your local library.

California Department of Health Care Services
Mental Health Services Division
dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/MentalHealthPrograms-Svcs.aspx

Ombudsman
(888) 452-8609
MMCDOmbudsmanOffice@dhcs.ca.gov

Behavioral Health Agency
dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/MHPContactList.aspx

You can find this information online by scanning the QR code.

Thank You for Your Jury Service!

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