



# Emotional Support Forum

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### I. Background

In a world where human rights are increasingly well protected, victims of crime still inevitably suffer during the investigation and prosecutorial process. The crime causes physical pain, mental distress, and damage to their properties and family. Victims or deceased victims' family (survivors) need a period of time for psychological and life adjustment in order to return to the society and life as normal. However,

victims or survivors are often helpless when it comes to dealing with legal issues. They are unaware of their rights and roles, often unable to take advantage of the proper procedures and timing to defend their own rights, and are thus left with regrets. Therefore, it is essential to establish a comprehensive criminal procedure, which supports and protects the victims, elevate their status and defend their rights. The purpose of this forum is to explore victims' rights through identifying judicial and social resources to provide all the assistance victims or survivors need.

Victims are going down a path of grief triggered by their loss. Some people wish to bypass this sorrowful path,

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1. Authored by the Assistant Secretary of Association for Victims Support Taipei Branch.



which is emotional and agonizing. They might feel scared, helpless, furious, nervous, anxious, suppressed and sad. When these strong emotions create unaccepted conflicts against the social norm or family rules, the person who is grieving might unknowingly suppress or refuse to reveal their true emotions, feeling numb, nonchalant, denying or they turn away from their genuine feelings. The chaos in the subconscious minds is often undetected by others. As is the severity of their grief, many studies have indicated that diseases and death rates often increase among people proportionately. These mournful emotions are actually normal and healthy, and the distress and behavioral problems can be eased through acceptance by encouraging them to express their emotions.

## II.Objective

Our objective is to build consensus among litigants, practitioners, government entities and academics in the legal field through sharing and exchange of experiences in order to establish

proper protocol for legal procedure and advocacy, which are recognized by victims and survivors. This will help minimize controversies and disputes for the parties involved and ensure that trials may proceed without obstacles.

This series of group lessons are designed to help people get through grief healthily within a reasonable timeframe to enhance their ability to return to life as normal. The lessons also help victims and their families deal with emotional stress caused by their loss and wrap up any unfinished affairs.

## III.Implementation

The Association for Victims Support Taipei Branch (AVS Taipei Branch) adjusted the format and schedule of the Legal and Emotional Support Forums. In the past, the Emotional Support Forum was held between 7pm and 9pm on weeknights. However, survivors, lawyers and consulting psychologists work during the weekdays, so attending the forum on a weeknight is exhausting and stressful. Currently, the forum has

been rescheduled to one Saturday afternoon between 2pm and 5pm each month. This will encourage more participants to attend on the weekend with ample time for them to share their personal experiences. We hope that the group format will encourage survivors to share their feelings and legal progress. Lawyers and counselors are present to provide professional legal advices and ease their pain. This forum allows survivors to better understand the legal system and gain emotional relief. They can also share their valuable experiences with other survivors.

The Emotional Support Forum is held in small groups. AVS Taipei Branch invites consulting psychologists, lawyers and 3 to 5 families to each group. Each family faces different issues at different stages. Some just started, and some have already completed the legal procedures. Their emotions manifest differently at different stages, and they share their journeys with each other. When the lawyers and the participants analyze the legal issues, the consulting psychologists would observe their emotional state based on how they ex-

press themselves and provide suggestions to each accordingly.

During the Emotional Support Forum, lawyers and consulting psychologists observe the victims and survivors. The victims and survivors also observe each other and give each other advices. The small group format is uncommon. In the past, participants were often left without any support or perhaps intervened or comforted only by volunteers. Now with this forum, AVS Taipei Branch brings together people with similar experiences to share what they have been through, which may provide a different comforting and learning experience for victims and survivors.

Small group activities differ from large-scale activities in that the consulting psychologists are able to observe and detect actual conditions and provide practical suggestions accordingly. We intend to continue running the Emotional Support Forum in the future and hope to reach more people in need.



The first Emotional Support Forum



Restarting the Emotional Support Forum

