

The Jury Duty Experience

Thank you for serving your community.

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

It is not uncommon for jurors to experience temporary anxiety or increased stress after jury duty. Some temporary signs of distress following jury duty may include:

- anxiety
- sleep or appetite changes
- moodiness
- physical problems (headaches, stomachaches or no energy)
- second guessing your verdict
- feeling guilty
- fear
- trouble dealing with issues or topics related to the case
- a desire to be by yourself
- decreased concentration or memory problems

REMEMBER: You are having normal responses to an unusual experience.

- Jury service is an important responsibility and the right of every citizen.
- Resist negative thoughts about the verdict.
- No matter what others think about the verdict, your opinion is the only one that matters.
- You don't have to prove yourself to anyone.
- Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to serve on a jury. Some cases are violent, brutal and hard to deal with. 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 and/or law enforcement immediately.

If signs of distress persist for two weeks after the jury service has ended, consider contacting your physician or seek mental health treatment services in your area.

The South Dakota Department of Social Services website provides a behavioral health treatment services county map to help locate mental health services in your area, which could include assistance in paying for services if you need it. Visit <https://dss.sd.gov/behavioralhealth/agencycounty.aspx>.

The 988 Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources. Text or call 988 or visit <https://988lifeline.org>.

Helpful Tips After Jury Service Has Been Completed

- **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 family physician or a member of the clergy.
Reminder: You should not speak about case specific information during the trial.
- **Stick to your normal, daily routines.**
It is important to return to your normal schedule. Don't isolate yourself.
- **Get the names and numbers of at least two other jurors.**
It can be helpful to talk to people who went through the experience with you. It can help you to remember that you were part of a group (jury) and are not alone.
- **Limit alcohol, caffeine and nicotine.**
These substances can increase anxiety, fatigue and make sleep problems worse.
- **Relax with deep breathing.**
 - Breathe in slowly through your nose.
 - Breathe out through your mouth.
 - Slow your thoughts down and think about a relaxing scene.
 - Continue deep breathing until you feel more relaxed.
- **Cope with sleep problems.**
 - Increase your daily exercise, but do not exercise just before bedtime.
 - Decrease your caffeine consumption, especially in the afternoon or evening.
 - Do "boring" activities before bedtime.
 - Listen to relaxation tapes or relaxing music before bedtime.

South Dakota Unified Judicial System

State Court Administrator's Office | 500 East Capitol Ave. | Pierre, SD 57501
605-773-3474 | <https://uj.s.sd.gov>

