

## Wellbeing Advice During Court Proceedings

### A Resource for Frontline Staff and Legal Counsel to Discuss with Victims

Viewing court hearings remotely may be difficult and stressful for you and your family. You may hear details of the attacks that are new to you. The days might feel long and tiring. You are likely to feel a range of emotions, from anger, sadness, anxiety, to numbness.

Wellbeing from an Islamic perspective is holistic, with a balance between caring for our physical, mental, social/family, and spiritual health. Seeking Allah (God) in times of need is core for many Muslims.

**Think about things that have helped in the past, and try to put these in place. Here are some ideas:**

#### Have Good Supports Around You

- Spend time with people you trust and feel safe with. You might want to talk about what you have heard and read, or talk about other things and get your mind off it.
- Let people know you are watching, who can call and check in with you
- There will be limited access to interpretation services during the hearing, so you may want to watch with someone who can help translate for you.

#### Be Mindful of Children

Court content is distressing and not appropriate for children. You might also find it difficult to care for them while you are watching.

- Give children the chance to ask questions about what is going on. Give them basic information and let them know they are safe.
- Arrange for childcare or for playdates at a friend's house to give yourself some space. Funded childcare may be available through Victim Support.
- You may have teenagers or young adults who are closely following media reporting. Watch for signs of distress including withdrawal and changes in behaviour. Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult about what they are thinking and feeling.
- Be mindful of what children can see or hear if you are watching from home. Wearing headphones is recommended.

#### Make Practical Preparations

It might be difficult to think about other responsibilities during the week of the hearing.

- Prepare meals in advance, or talk with friends about how you can cook for each other.
- Get housework done ahead of time, or take a break altogether.
- If friends have offered to help, consider taking up this offer! Perhaps ask for children to be collected from school/daycare or dropped to after-school activities.
- Talk to your work/school/uni about taking some time off or getting an extension on any upcoming deadlines. You may need a few days to recover afterwards.
- Check your internet bandwidth. Funding to help with data allowance may be available through Victim Support.

## Take Care of Your Body and Mind

Taking care of your physical health can help with managing stressful times.

- Take breaks when you can. You don't have to listen to, or watch everything. Online viewing can cause brain fatigue. Perhaps check the court schedule to prioritise sessions to watch.
- Eat regularly and drink lots of water. Try not to have too much caffeine and junk food.
- Have a good sleep routine and try to sleep early if possible.
- Try going for a walk in the mornings or evenings.
- Rahma/mercy towards yourself is important.

## Take a Break from Media

There is likely to be news coverage and activity on social media about the hearing. **Remember you have the choice to stop watching or reading at any time.**

- Limit your time on social media and the news to give yourself a break.
- Avoid reading comments or people's posts as these can be upsetting.
- Encourage young people to unplug and take breaks from social media.

## Use Self-soothing and Grounding Techniques

If you are feeling physically or emotionally overwhelmed, you can try a few things to soothe your body and bring yourself back to the Here and Now:

- Notice 3 things you can feel, hear, see, smell, and taste.
- Have things with you that soothe you, e.g. aromatherapy oil, coffee beans, dhikr beads, blanket, pets.
- Prayer/Salaah can be soothing, grounding, and help to re-focus and give strength. Make wudhu in cold water to stimulate your senses.
- Exercise, and spend some time outdoors
- If you are tense, tightening then loosening your muscles will help.
- Try taking slow, deep breaths in and out.

## Ask for Help

If you or someone you know needs emotional support:

- Contact Victim Support to connect to a counsellor if you don't have one.
- Connect to an MSD Case Manager on 03 961 9257
- Your GP can provide support or refer you to local community services.
- Free call or text 1737, or visit <https://1737.org.nz/> for confidential counselling
- Purapura Whetu 0800 4 WHETU
- Christchurch Resettlement Services 03 335 0311
- For other helpful suggestions about looking after your wellbeing, visit:
  - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>
  - <https://www.resilient.org.nz/>