



An August 2013 note from Joan Shirley, one victim to another,

Do YOU consider yourself a victim or a survivor?

What seems like a simple question has many important facets to its answer. Within victim services providers like, law enforcement offices, DA's offices, and some support agencies like ours, the Resource Center for Victims of Violent Death, the NM Crime Victims Reparation Commission or the Grief Services Program within the NM Office of the Medical Investigator, these two terms are often used interchangeably. Even within these agencies you might be called a victim, survivor, or family member by anyone at any time. Read your newspaper, iPhone, iPad or watch the news on TV and see how they speak about the victims and the survivors.

"It is absolutely true that, in common usage, someone who lives through a life-threatening illness or injury is said to have "survived" and is thus a "survivor." And one who dies has not "survived." Clearly, "homicide survivor or murder survivor" appears to be contrary to most people's understanding, nobody who is murdered; survives. However, when it comes to explaining how you feel or want to be referred to either after an attempted murder or after your family has endured the murder of a loved one may depend on your definition of a victim or survivor. Let's look at the actual definitions:

*A "**survivor**" is: a) somebody who survives: somebody who remains alive despite being exposed to life-threatening danger; b) somebody with great powers of endurance; c) somebody who shows a great will to live or a great determination to overcome difficulties and carry on; or d) inheritor: the one of two or more people having joint interests in property who lives longer than the other or others and is, therefore, entitled to the entire property; **Synonyms:** stayer, sticker, fighter, toughie*

*A "**victim**" is: a) somebody hurt or killed; somebody is hurt or killed by somebody or something, especially in a crime, accident, or disaster; b) somebody or something harmed; somebody who or something that is adversely affected by an action or circumstance; or c) somebody is duped; somebody who is tricked or exploited. **Synonyms:** injured party, fatality, casualty, sufferer.*

I don't know about you, but I see myself in both of these definitions as well as our son, Kevin.

However, most people in agencies, newscasts and newspapers, do not struggle as to what you are or want to be called; they have set words that they use for particular crimes; these words or descriptions might not describe your personal identity as to your victimization. They are not trying to disrespect your identity in anyway. Ultimately, you are “a victim of crime;” and it was against the law of NM.

*Our agency is called the Resource Center for Victims of Violent Death. Pat and I fully realize that some people do not want to be considered a victim in that it means that they are weak and need help. We also understand that many people want to be able to “pull themselves up by their boot straps and go on;” without our help. However, our experience has proven that regardless of what we call you; murder and attempted murder can bring the strongest person to their knees; most people recover better over time with support. Others are just so lost, sad and devastated that they want and need to be treated very gently. Remember that even at our weakest, being a survivor means strength, endurance and resiliency to survive even though there are days when you will not feel able to go on. **Resiliency** means: a) recovering quickly: able to recover quickly from setbacks and b)elastic: able to spring back quickly into shape after being bent, stretched, or **squashed**; Synonyms: **hardy, strong, tough, robust, buoyant, irrepressible, spirited, resistant** I’d say that I am now more resilient now than I was when Kevin was murdered. I have faced the most horrific thing that’s ever happened to me and learned that life changes quickly and I can endure just about anything now. Personally, I have felt moments of feeling squashed by this experience; I like that word!*

This is like being a hamster in a wheel; it all means that you are a victim of crime who was deliberately and excessively wronged by someone else, and that the words used by the people you are dealing with may not fully understand or honor the impact on you or your family nor how you feel about your ability to deal with the tragedy or recovery you are facing. As you go through this journey and you live through every part of it, you are surviving through it; therefore, you are definitely a survivor. Please just let us know which description you would like for us to use as we speak with you so that we are honoring your feelings and beliefs.

I can certainly tell you that I am a victim of murder who has been taught and supported by many to become a strong survivor. It hasn’t been easy, it has changed who I am today and given me a desire to help others in their journeys. Our hope here at the Resource Center is to assist you anywhere in your victimization so that in the end, wherever that may be, that you will have learned enough positive coping skills to live the rest of your life as a strong survivor.

Excerpts from Patti March NM Survivors of Homicide, Inc.NMSOH.org

Lester Jackson and online dictionary

In the October Victim to Victim newsletter, we will discuss the difference between homicide and murder and talk about our bridge of stepping stones to help you through your journey.

Our Support Groups

Albuquerque – 10701 Lomas NE, Suite 115

Tuesdays August 13th and Sept. 10th 1-3pm in our ABQ office

Wednesdays August 21 and Sept. 18th 6-8pm in our ABQ office

Going east on Lomas from Eubank, turn left at the light of HOTEL and Lomas (Target is on your right as is Petco) this will put you in our parking lot area. Our building, 10701, will be on your right (there is a metal sculpture of a man carrying a briefcase by our front door by the mailbox and signage for this building but we are not labeled the sign) go into the yellow doors and go down the stairs. Now go to your left and follow the path to our office Suite 115 right across from the pond area. If you are unable to do stairs, please let us know and we can make arrangements to meet in a different part of this facility where there are no stairs to navigate.

Rio Rancho

*The LAST Thursdays August 29th and Sept. 26th 6:30-8pm at the Star Heights
Community Center 800 Polaris Blvd SE*

The center is located behind the Walmart at Unser and Southern-turn off of Southern onto Unser going North, turn left onto Wexford, follow Wexford until you see the sign for the community center and turn right onto Polaris-you'll see the center on your right. Go into the double doors and go straight into the library. You will see our banner by the door.

See page 4 (over)

Another Support Group ...

Los Lunas

The LAST Wednesdays August 28th and Sept. 25th 6-8pm

at the Wellness Center/Heritage Park 3445 Lambros Loop

The center is located east of the intersection where Highway 47 and Main Street meet in Los Lunas; a light brown building on the south end of the Heritage park area. From this intersection, continue on 47 going south and you will see the loop entrance on your left before you reach the next light. Curve around on this loop until you see the Wellness Center on your right. You may park right there in front of the building. Go into the main door, and turn left. When you get to another hall on your right, you will see our banner and go into that room. Prior to this hall on your right, there will be many offices.

If you get lost or need to speak with me on a support group day, please don't hesitate to call my cell phone 505-238-166, and any other time you need to talk too!

We can also provide Spanish speaking assistance.

 OFFICE	 TELEPHONE	 ON-LINE
<p>The Atrium Building at 10701 Lomas NE, Suite 115 Albuquerque, NM 87112 (just east of Eubank on Lomas)</p> <p>Drop in hours: Monday thru Friday Noon – 3 p.m. <i>You may call for in home, individual or after-hours appointments.</i></p> <p>Victim Groups meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 2nd Tuesdays from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. ✓ 3rd Wednesdays from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. ✓ Last Wed/Thursday evenings – call for info 	<p style="text-align: center;">505-243-222 & 855-430-2232 – toll free</p> <p>After hours contacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pat Caristo – 505-299-8712 Exec Dir./Intake /Case Mgr. ✓ Joan Shirley -- 505-238-1663 Victim Advocate <p style="text-align: center;"><i>We can set up a conference call so you can join in if you can't get into Albuquerque.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">E-mail: pacnia@usa.net</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEW WEBSITE: www.bridgesforvictimssofviolentdeath.org</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Facebook – our F/B page is being constructed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>We are a 501© (3) organization, so your donations are tax-deductible.</u> <u>Thank you, in advance.</u></p>