



# The Impact of Legal Intervention on Victims Mental Health

Ekta Chandrakar

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, Kalinga University, Naya Raipur (C.G.)

ekta.chandrakar@kalingauniversity.ac.in

## Abstract

The impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health is a complex and highly contested subject. On one hand, legal intervention can provide victims with a sense of justice, closure, and empowerment, while on the other hand, the process of obtaining legal intervention can cause victims to experience traumatization, feelings of shame, and a sense of powerlessness. This paper will explore the psychological effects of legal interventions on victims, discuss the challenges of obtaining legal intervention, and consider possible solutions to improve access to justice for victims. Ultimately, this paper will argue that legal intervention can be beneficial for victims' mental health, however, the process of obtaining legal intervention should be further improved in order to ensure that victims are not retraumatized in the process.

**Keywords:** legal intervention, mental health, victims, psychological effects

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## Introduction

Legal intervention is a process that involves the use of the criminal justice system to address behaviours that are deemed to be criminal or harmful to society. This process often involves the involvement of the police, prosecutors, and the courts, and may result in a criminal conviction or the imposition of a criminal sentence. The legal system can have a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of victims, and understanding the psychological effects of legal intervention on victims is important for providing effective and appropriate mental health services. This paper will discuss the impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health, including the psychological effects of being a victim in the legal system, the potential for long-term psychological trauma, and the importance of providing mental health services to victims of crime.

*The Psychological Effects of Being a Victim in the Legal System*

Being a victim of a crime can be a traumatic experience, and the process of navigating the legal system can be further taxing on victims' mental health and well-being. Victims often feel powerless and frustrated as they attempt to make sense of the legal process, and may experience feelings of isolation and neglect. Additionally, victims may feel re-traumatized as they recount the details of their experiences in order to provide evidence for a criminal trial. This can be especially difficult for victims of sexual assault and other forms of abuse, who may be reluctant to share details of their experiences and may feel ashamed or embarrassed. Furthermore, victims may experience a sense of guilt or responsibility for the crime, and may feel that they are to blame for the harm that has been done to them.

*The Potential for Long-Term Psychological Trauma*

Victims of crime may also experience long-term psychological trauma as a result of their



experiences, even if they have obtained justice through the legal system. This can include feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression, as well as difficulty trusting other people, difficulty sleeping, and flashbacks to the traumatic event. Additionally, victims may experience difficulty functioning in their daily lives and may struggle with their relationships with others. This can be especially true for victims of violent crimes or sexual assault, who may be deeply affected by the experience and may struggle to cope with the psychological effects for years afterwards.

#### *The Importance of Providing Mental Health Services to Victims of Crime*

Given the potential for long-term psychological trauma, it is important for victims of crime to receive mental health support and services. This can include counseling and therapy, which can help victims to process and cope with their experiences. Additionally, victims may benefit from support groups and other resources that can provide a sense of community and promote healing. It is important for victims to have access to these services in order to help them cope with their experiences and to provide a safe and supportive environment in which to process their trauma.

Legal intervention can have a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of victims. Understanding the psychological effects of legal intervention on victims is important for providing effective and appropriate mental health services. Victims may experience feelings of powerlessness, frustration, guilt, and re-traumatization as they navigate the legal system, and they may also experience long-term psychological trauma. It is important for victims to have access to mental health support and services in order to help them process and cope with their experiences.

The impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health is an important topic of discussion. Victims of crime often experience a range of negative mental health effects, including trauma, depression, anxiety, and

post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Legal intervention, such as criminal trials, can be an important part of the healing process. However, the process can be very traumatic and can lead to further psychological distress and even re-victimization. This paper will discuss the potential impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health, including both positive and negative effects. It will also provide recommendations for practitioners and policy makers to consider when working with victims of crime.

Legal intervention can have a profound impact on victims of crime, both positive and negative. Victims of crime often experience a range of emotions including shock, anger, fear, and depression. In many cases, legal intervention is the only way to ensure that justice is served and that victims of crime receive the help and support they need. This paper will explore the impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health and well-being. Specifically, this paper will address the potential effects of legal intervention on victims' mental health, as well as potential strategies for mitigating the negative impacts of legal intervention. Legal intervention can have a significant impact on victims' mental health. The process of going through the legal system can be incredibly stressful and traumatic for victims, leading to a range of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Victims may feel overwhelmed by the process and unable to cope, leading to further psychological distress. Additionally, victims may feel a sense of helplessness as they are unable to control the outcome of their case, which can lead to feelings of frustration and hopelessness.

In addition to the psychological effects of legal intervention, victims may experience physical effects as well. The stress of the legal process can lead to physical ailments such as headaches, nausea, fatigue, and insomnia. These physical effects can exacerbate the psychological distress experienced by victims, leading to further mental health issues. It is



important to recognize the potential negative impacts of legal intervention on victims' mental health and take steps to mitigate them. One strategy for doing so is to ensure that victims are adequately supported throughout the legal process. Victims should be provided with emotional support from legal professionals, as well as access to mental health resources such as counselling and therapy. Additionally, victims should be given clear and up-to-date information about their case and their rights, so that they can better understand the legal process and feel more in control of the situation.

Another strategy for mitigating the negative impacts of legal intervention on victims' mental health is to ensure that victims are given a voice in the legal process. Victims should be given the opportunity to express their concerns and opinions, and their views should be taken into account when making decisions about their case. Additionally, victims should be encouraged to take part in any restorative justice processes that may be available. Legal intervention can have a significant impact on victims' mental health, both positive and negative. It is important to

recognize the potential negative impacts of legal intervention and take steps to mitigate them. Strategies such as providing victims with emotional support and giving them a voice in the legal process can help to reduce the psychological distress experienced by victims. Ultimately, by taking steps to ensure that victims' mental health and well-being are taken into account throughout the legal process, we can help to ensure that victims are better able to cope with the trauma of the legal system.

#### Literature review

The impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health has been studied in a variety of settings, including criminal justice, civil justice, and family law settings. Studies have found that victims' involvement in the legal process can have both positive and negative effects on their mental health. On the positive side, legal intervention can provide victims with a sense of justice and closure, as well as a feeling of empowerment (Ogbeet al.2020). On the other hand, it can also lead to increased levels of psychological distress, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety.

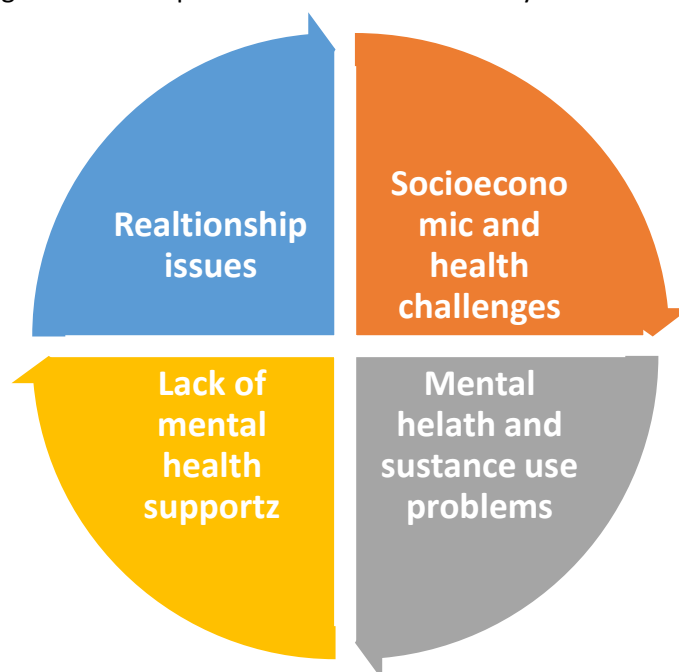


Figure 2: Different type of impacts on mental health  
(Source: made by the author)

In the criminal justice context, studies have found that victims who receive legal intervention experience a greater sense of closure and justice compared to those who do not. This is particularly true for victims of sexual assault, who often feel re-victimized by the legal process. In addition, victims who receive legal intervention have been found to have lower levels of PTSD, depression, and anxiety compared to those who do not (Nakajima et al.2022). Studies have also examined the impact of legal intervention in

civil justice settings. In general, these studies have found that victims who receive legal intervention experience greater levels of satisfaction with the legal system and are more likely to achieve a sense of closure and justice. In addition, victims who receive legal intervention are more likely to view the legal process as fairer and to report higher levels of satisfaction with the outcome compared to those who do not receive legal intervention.

<p>Positive Effects</p>	<p>Increased sense of safety and security: Victims of crime may experience greater feelings of safety and security after legal intervention is implemented. This can help to restore their trust in the system and provide a sense of justice.</p> <p>Improved coping skills: Legal intervention may provide victims with resources and support to help them cope with the trauma of the crime and move forward.</p> <p>Increased sense of control: Victims may experience greater control over their lives and their environment after legal intervention is taken. This can help to reduce feelings of helplessness and fear.</p>
<p>Negative Effects</p>	<p>Heightened stress: Victims may experience greater levels of stress as the legal process unfolds. This can lead to further physical and mental health issues.</p> <p>Increased fear: Victims may experience greater fear as the legal process progresses. This can lead to further mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression.</p> <p>Isolation: Victims may become isolated from their social networks due to the legal process. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and further mental health issues.</p>

Table 1: Effects of Legal Intervention on Mental Health

Source: (Wertz et al.2020)

Finally, research has examined the impact of legal intervention in family law settings. Results indicate that victims who receive legal intervention experience lower levels of depression and anxiety compared to those who do not. In addition, victims who receive legal intervention are more likely to report

feeling a sense of justice and closure, as well as feelings of empowerment. Overall, the literature suggests that legal intervention can have both positive and negative impacts on victims' mental health (Wertz et al.2020). While it may provide victims with a sense of justice and closure, it can also lead to



increased levels of psychological distress. Therefore, it is important for legal systems to provide victims with appropriate levels of support and resources in order to minimize any potential negative effects.

The impact of legal intervention on the mental health of victims of crime has been the subject of much research. Studies have looked at the impact of legal intervention on victims of different types of crime, including physical and sexual assault, homicide, domestic violence, stalking, and cybercrime (Su et al.2021, Bhambulkar, A. 2011.). Many of these studies have found that legal intervention, such as filing a police report and going to court, can have a positive effect on the mental health of victims. For example, it can reduce feelings of helplessness, provide a sense of control, facilitate empowerment, improve access to resources, and provide a sense of justice. However, the impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health is complex and not necessarily straightforward. For example, the process of filing a police report and going to court may be difficult for some victims and can be very stressful. Victims may experience fear, anxiety, and guilt, and may also have to relive the traumatic experience of the crime. This can lead to an increase in psychological distress and can have a negative impact on mental health.

In addition, there are often delays in the legal process, which can be frustrating for victims and can lead to feelings of hopelessness. The outcome of the legal process, such as the decision of a judge or jury, may also be unsatisfactory and can lead to feelings of anger and disappointment (Adomet al.2021). Overall, the impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health is complex and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Different victims of crime may respond differently to legal intervention, and the impact will depend on a range of factors, such as the individual's pre-existing mental health, the type of crime experienced, and the level of support received. It is important to consider these

factors when supporting victims of crime and to provide appropriate mental health support as needed.

Legal intervention is an important factor in determining the mental health of victims of crime. Studies have shown that legal intervention can have both positive and negative impacts on the mental health of victims, depending on the type of intervention and the context of the crime. For example, the presence of supportive legal professionals such as attorneys and victim advocates can provide victims with a sense of safety and security, enabling them to cope better with the trauma of the crime (Shah et al.2020). On the other hand, legal intervention can also have a negative impact on victims, such as increasing feelings of distress or anxiety due to the need to testify or to be exposed to the criminal justice system.

Studies have found that the type of legal intervention can be a critical factor in determining the mental health outcomes of victims. For instance, research has shown that legal intervention that is victim-centered and trauma-informed can have positive effects on victims' mental health. This type of intervention is characterized by the provision of information and support to victims, as well as recognition of the victim's experiences and needs (Petroskyet al.2020). In contrast, intervention that is overly legalistic or adversarial can have a negative impact on victims' mental health, with victims feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, or re-traumatized by the experience.

Furthermore, research has found that the context of the crime can also influence the effects of legal intervention on victims' mental health. For example, victims of domestic violence may benefit from legal intervention that is tailored to the specific needs of domestic violence victims, such as providing victim advocates to provide emotional support and connecting victims to domestic violence shelters and other resources (Wang et al.2020). Similarly, victims of sexual assault may benefit from interventions that are



sensitive to the unique needs of sexual assault victims, such as providing counselling and support services.

Overall, research suggests that when legal intervention is tailored to the specific needs of victims and is provided in a supportive and trauma-informed manner, it can have positive impacts on victims' mental health. However, legal intervention that is overly legalistic or

adversarial can have negative impacts on victims' mental health, and the context of the crime can also play an important role in determining the effects of legal intervention. Thus, it is important to ensure that legal intervention is tailored to the specific needs of victims and is provided in a supportive and trauma-informed manner.

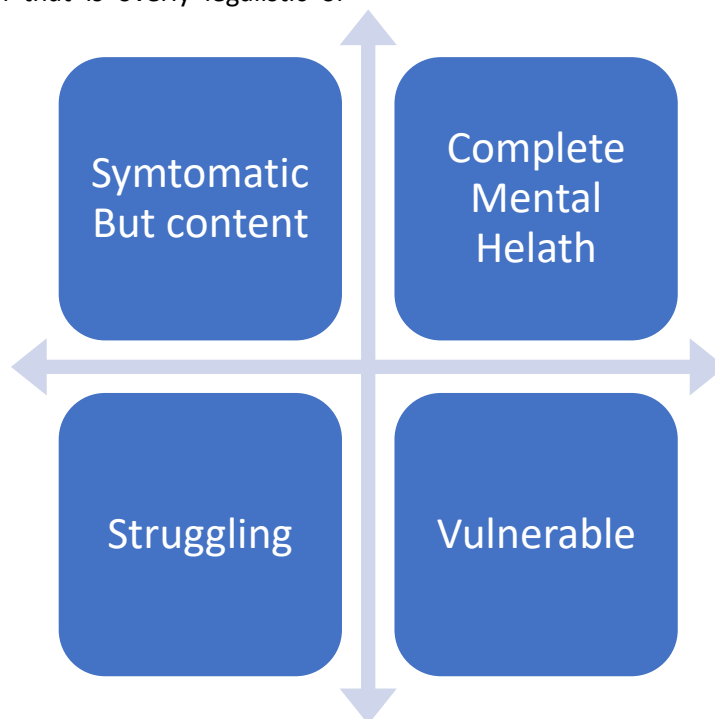


Figure 2: Different dividers of mental health

(Source: made by the author)

The impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health has been the subject of numerous studies. The literature shows that the legal process can have a significant effect on the mental health of victims of crime. Studies have found that the process of pursuing legal action, such as filing a police report or seeking a restraining order, can lead to an increase in feelings of distress and fear, as well as feelings of anger, guilt, betrayal, and helplessness. Furthermore, victims may experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, such as intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, nightmares, and hyper vigilance (Liu et al.2019). Studies have also found that the legal process can be a source of re-traumatization for victims, which can further exacerbate their mental health issues.

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Additionally, legal intervention can lead to a decrease in trust in the legal system, which can have a detrimental effect on victims' mental health.

Studies have also examined the effectiveness of legal interventions in improving victims' mental health. Many studies have found that legal interventions can have a positive effect on victims' mental health, including reduced symptoms of PTSD and improved self-esteem. Additionally, legal interventions can lead to an increase in victims' sense of safety and control, which can be beneficial for their mental health. Furthermore, research has shown that legal interventions can lead to an increase in victims' sense of justice, which can help to improve their mental health (Davila et al.2021). The literature shows that legal

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interventions can have both positive and negative effects on victims’ mental health. On the one hand, the legal process can lead to an increase in distress, fear, and re-traumatization, which can have a detrimental effect on victims’ mental health. On the other hand, legal interventions can also have positive effects, including an increased sense of safety, justice, and control, which can lead to improved mental health. Therefore, it is important that victims of crime receive appropriate legal services and support to help them navigate the legal process and ensure their mental health is protected.

The impact of legal intervention on the mental health of victims of crime and abuse has become an increasingly important and controversial topic in recent years. Studies

have documented the psychological impact of crime and abuse on victims, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. However, research on the impact of legal intervention, including the criminal justice process, on the mental health of victims has been limited. This review of the literature examines the evidence for the impact of legal intervention on the mental health of victims of crime and abuse, with a focus on research conducted since 2000 (Marburger and Pickover 2020). The review discusses the existing research in terms of the types of legal intervention studied and the different mental health outcomes measured. It also examines the potential benefits and risks of legal intervention on victims’ mental health.

Legal Intervention	Impact on Victims Mental Health
Legal protection orders	Victims may feel safer and more secure as they are legally protected from further harm.
Legal representation	Access to legal representation can help victims to better understand their rights and options, reducing their stress and anxiety.
Participation in the criminal justice system	Victims may experience a sense of empowerment and satisfaction as they have a part to play in the process, which can help to improve their mental health.
Compensation	Receiving compensation can help victims to regain some of what they have lost and can provide a feeling of justice, which can help to improve their mental health.

Table 2: Impact on Victims Mental Health

Source: (Rothman et al.2021)\

The findings of the review suggest that legal intervention may have both positive and negative impacts on victims’ mental health. On the one hand, some studies have suggested that the criminal justice process may have a positive effect on victims’ mental health, such as reducing PTSD symptoms, increasing feelings of safety, and providing victims with a sense of justice and closure. On the other hand, other studies have indicated that the criminal justice process may also have a negative effect on victims’ mental

health, such as increasing feelings of distress, re-traumatization, and anxiety (Rothman et al.2021). The evidence suggests that the effects of legal intervention on victims’ mental health depend on a variety of factors, including the type of legal intervention, the nature of the crime/abuse, and the victims’ individual characteristics. Overall, the findings of this review indicate that legal intervention can have both positive and negative impacts on victims’ mental health. As such, it is important that policy makers, practitioners,



and researchers take into account the potential benefits and risks of legal intervention on victims' mental health when making decisions about the criminal justice process.

### **Conclusion**

Legal intervention, such as filing a lawsuit or pursuing a criminal case, can have a profound impact on victims' mental health. Such interventions can provide a sense of justice and closure, which can help victims to cope with the trauma they experienced and begin to heal. On the other hand, the legal process can cause further distress and anxiety, as victims may feel overwhelmed or re-traumatized. It is important for victims to have access to mental health support and resources to help them navigate the legal process and cope with the emotional impact of their experience.

The impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health can be significant. Legal intervention may provide safety and justice for victims, but it can also be a traumatic and stressful experience. Victims may experience fear and anxiety throughout the process, and may have difficulty coping with the resulting emotions. Additionally, victims may have difficulty trusting the legal system and may experience feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability. Research has shown that victims may experience a variety of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse. It is important for victims to receive appropriate mental health services to help them cope with the impact of legal intervention. It is also important for legal professionals to be aware of the potential psychological impact of legal intervention and to provide support and resources to help victims cope with the challenges and stress they may experience.

Legal intervention can have a positive impact on victims' mental health, especially if the intervention is tailored to the victim's needs. Victims are more likely to feel a sense of safety and security when they have access to

legal resources and support. Additionally, a legal intervention can provide victims with a sense of closure, justice, and empowerment. Furthermore, research indicates that legal interventions have been associated with improved psychological functioning, reduced PTSD symptoms, and improved quality of life for victims. However, it is important to note that the impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health may vary depending on the individual case and the type of intervention used.

The impact of legal intervention on victims' mental health is undeniable. Legal intervention can provide victims with a sense of justice, closure, and safety, but it can also create additional stress and trauma. Victims may experience flashbacks, anxiety, and depression due to the legal process, and this can further compound the emotional and psychological effects of the original crime. It is important for victims to be aware of the potential risks associated with legal intervention, and to take steps to protect their mental health, such as seeking support from a counsellor or therapist. By doing so, victims can ensure that they are able to cope with the legal process and its potential effects on their mental health.

Research has demonstrated that legal intervention can have both positive and negative impacts on victims' mental health. On one hand, legal intervention can provide a sense of justice, closure, and protection from further harm. On the other hand, the process of seeking justice can be stressful and traumatic, leading to further psychological distress. Therefore, it is important to ensure that victims of crime receive appropriate support throughout the legal process in order to maximize the potential positive effects and mitigate the potential negative effects.

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