

WHAT HAPPENS TO JURORS AFTER THE TRIAL ENDS?

A trauma-informed approach to juror participation,
wellbeing, and civic service

Matti Girardi

Trauma-Informed Equity & Inclusion Director
Multnomah County District Attorney's Office

The juror we don't always see

Imagine being summoned for jury duty.

You arrange childcare. You take time off work. You show up expecting to do your civic duty.

Then you are selected for a case involving the death of a child.

You spend weeks hearing graphic testimony, seeing disturbing evidence, and listening to a family describe the worst thing that has happened to them.

The trial ends. You are thanked for your service. You go home.

What happens next?

Juror participation isn't only about getting people into the courthouse.

It is also about creating conditions that allow people to complete their service without being harmed by it.

PREPARE

Set expectations

EQUIP

Give practical tools

CONNECT

Stay present

SUPPORT

Respond when needed

What is secondary trauma?

Indirect exposure to traumatic events can be disruptive and painful—and may persist after exposure.

MIND

Intrusive thoughts
Preoccupation
Changes in worldview

BODY

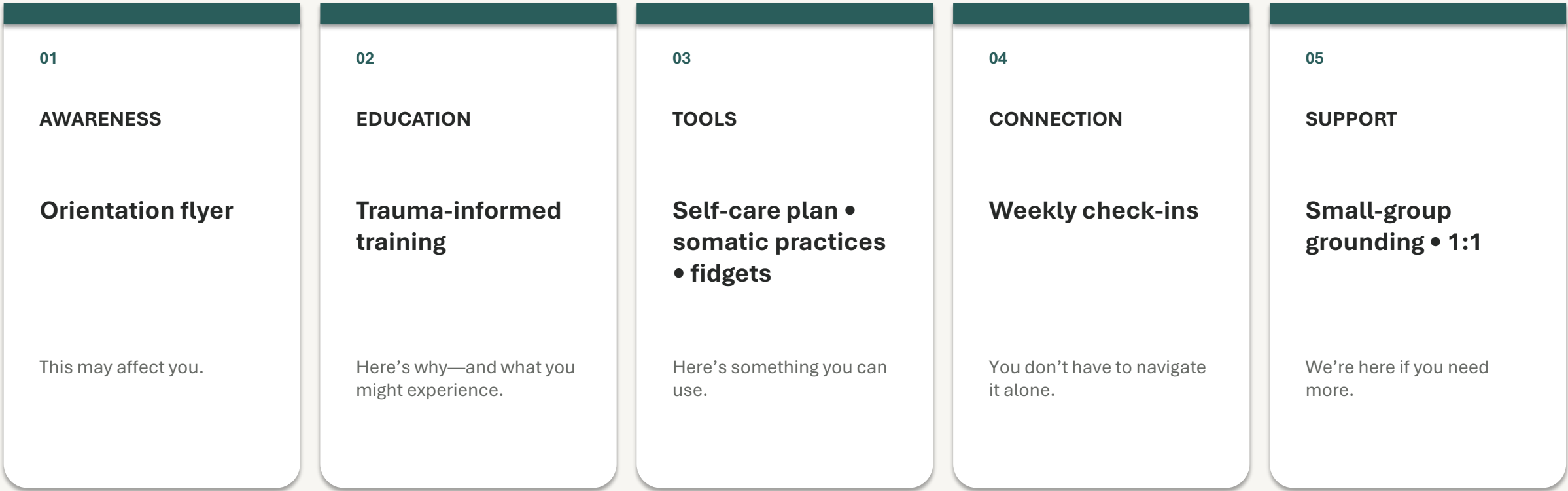
Sleep disruption
Exhaustion
Physical stress

BEHAVIOR / EMOTION

Numbness or indifference
Isolation
Feeling trapped or
overwhelmed

A difficult reaction is not necessarily a sign that something is wrong with the juror.

What support actually looks like



Support is layered. No single resource has to do all the work.

Give jurors something they can use



Juror Self-Care Worksheet

Why do I need to do this? It is very hard to think of what to do for yourself when things get tough. It is best to **have a plan ready** for when you need it.

What should be in it? You need to consider 3 general areas: what to do, what to think, and what to avoid.

- 1. Make a list of what you can do when you are upset that will be good for you.**
- a. What will help me relax?
- For example,
- Breathing, Muscle relaxation, Music
 - Reading for fun, watching a movie
 - Exercising, Taking a walk
- b. What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood?
- List all the things you like to do so you remember what they are when you need to think of something to do.
- c. What can I do that will help me throughout the day?
- For example,
- Avoid too much caffeine if feeling anxious
 - Remember to breathe
 - Watch my thoughts
 - Stay in the moment
- d. Other: What else do YOU need to do that is specific to YOU?
- 2. Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction.** For example, your best friend, other friends, sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest/minister/rabbi/imam, etc.
- a. Divide the list of people into categories by asking yourself the following questions:
- Who can I call if I am feeling depressed or anxious? • Who can I call if I feel isolated?
 - Who will come over to be with me if I need company?
 - Who will listen?
 - Who will encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun?
 - Who will remind me to follow my self-care plan?
 - Other:

Notes:

SELF-CARE PLAN

Identify what helps, who to contact, and what to do when things get tough.

List of Somatic Practices

Here's a list of somatic practices that can help when feeling emotionally overwhelmed or distressed. They are simple, accessible, and can be done in almost any environment:

- Breathing Techniques**
 - **Deep Belly Breathing:** Inhale deeply into the belly, then exhale slowly. Focus on the sensation of the breath moving in and out.
 - **Box Breathing:** Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat.
- Grounding**
 - **Feet on the Floor:** Press your feet into the ground and feel the solid surface beneath you, reminding yourself that you are supported.
 - **Weight Shifting:** Gently shift your weight from one foot to the other to reconnect with the present moment.
- Orienting**
 - **Notice Your Surroundings:** Shift your focus to objects around you—describe them silently or aloud (e.g., "I see a blue pen," "I feel the fabric of my chair").
 - **Look Around:** Scan your environment slowly, noting shapes, colors, and textures. This helps bring focus back to the present.
- Sensory Channel Switching**
 - **Touch:** Feel an object in your environment, like the texture of your clothing, a pen, or a cushion, and focus on the sensation.
 - **Sound:** Focus on one sound around you (e.g., birds, traffic, a fan) and listen closely for as long as you can.
- Movement Practices**
 - **Wiggle Fingers and Toes:** Move your fingers and toes in any direction. This helps to reconnect you with your body and release tension.
 - **Gentle Stretching:** Stretch your arms, neck, or back slowly, focusing on how the muscles feel as they lengthen.
 - **Small Tapping:** Gently tap your body, such as on your arms or legs, to stimulate a calming response.
- Body Scanning**
 - **Scan from Head to Toe:** Start at the top of your head and bring awareness down through your body, checking for any areas of tension or discomfort. Breathe into these areas to release them.
- Containment Practice**
 - **Imaginary Container:** Imagine a container (like a box or jar) that can hold your overwhelming emotions, and picture placing those emotions inside it for safekeeping.
 - **Create Boundaries:** Visualize a safe space around you, where you are protected and feel at ease, as if you have an invisible boundary.
- Self-Holding**
 - **Gentle Self-Hug:** Wrap your arms around yourself, offering comfort and warmth. Squeeze gently and breathe deeply.

SOMATIC PRACTICES

Breathing • grounding • orienting • movement
• sensory strategies

DISCREET FIDGETS

A small, private regulation tool.



Something to hold while staying present.

Support doesn't end when training ends

**The intervention
isn't only the
training.
It is also the
ongoing relationship.**

WEEKLY

Check in with jurors

AS NEEDED

Small-group grounding/support

PRIVATE

1:1 support when requested

ALWAYS

**Available for questions or additional
support**

The goal is not to tell jurors how they should feel. It is to give them options, connection, and support.

The hidden barrier to participation

We often think about barriers before jury service.

WORK

CHILDCARE

TRANSPORTATION

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

LANGUAGE

TRUST

**But what happens when someone does everything right—
and the experience itself becomes the barrier?**

Three opportunities for Oregon

01

PREPARE

Normalize the possibility of emotional impact before jurors encounter it.

02

BUILD IN SUPPORT

Make practical, trauma-informed support part of the jury process—not something a juror must discover on their own.

03

FOLLOW THROUGH

Consider what support looks like after service, when the obligation may end but the experience may not.

This does not require every county to replicate one model.

THE QUESTION I'D LEAVE YOU WITH

**If jury service is a
civic responsibility,**

**what responsibility does the system have
to the people who perform it?**

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Questions • Discussion