

Experts say jurors should get counseling

by UPI

ORLANDO, Fla. - U.S. legal experts are looking deeper into the prospect of hiring crisis workers to counsel jurors who must view gruesome evidence while serving.

The Orlando Sentinel reported on one juror who was deeply disturbed by photographs she had to view -- some of which included the corpse of a 9-year-old girl who was bound with wire and buried alive. Although the perpetrator of the crime was given a death sentence, the woman said she had continued to have trouble sleeping at night and was very paranoid.

Legal experts and psychologists say such reactions are not uncommon, and it is not unusual for jurors to suffer sleepless nights, relationship strains and even physical ailments when serving on particularly brutal cases.

In Florida, several public agencies reportedly want to test a "jury-debriefing program" in which certain jurors would meet with a certified crisis responder to learn coping mechanisms.

Some experts told the Sentinel they think crisis counseling for jurors should be a given when it comes to particularly difficult and emotional cases.

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.