



Victim support standards of WEISSER RING

Masthead:



WEISSER RING – Non-Profit organisation to support victims of
crime and crime prevention, registered association

Nationwide 420 branch offices

WEISSER RING e. V. • WR-article-nr. 1090

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1. Who we are

WEISSE RING is the only nationwide active victim support organisation in Germany. Our staff works in accordance to these professional standards.

The victim support offered by WEISSER RING is based on the idea of offering free help to victims of crime.

The victim support workers provide one-to-one assistance in a voluntary and professional capacity. They have diverse life and work experience and are trained to act as contact person and guide so as to recognise each victim's situation and provide suitable assistance. Our civic engagement helps victims of crime to rebuild their lives after being victimized.



We also cooperate with other full-time and voluntary organisations and partners in a constructive network.

We are independent from state funding and we are committed to help victims of crime. The help offered by WEISSER RING is free of charge and is guaranteed for everyone, including non-members. Our victim support workers work on voluntary basis. They do not allow themselves any personal benefits for their work.



2. Who we help

We help all victims of offences if evidence of a criminal offence seems sufficiently plausible. Help is provided regardless of whether a charge is brought or a perpetrator is convicted.

We also help relatives and those persons close to the victim, as well as emergency helpers and witnesses of the crime. We help people living in Germany, even if they fall victim to a crime abroad.

The variety of skills and experience that our victim support workers bring along as well as their flexibility in terms of time make it possible to find the right victim support worker in each case. If the victims are family members or friends of the victim support worker, other victim support workers will be entrusted with the task of helping, thus avoiding possible conflicts of interest.



3. How we help

We stand behind the victims. We respect each person in his/her situation as a victim, and accept his/her decisions without judging.

Our approach and understanding are a source of strength for those who have fallen victim to a crime. Each victim can trust us not to disclose confidential information to third parties. However, in criminal proceedings victim support workers are not entitled to withhold evidence in court or from the prosecution.

We publicize our rendered support amongst our network partners and at the initial contact points. **We offer active help and stand side by side each victim of a crime for as long as we are needed.** We accept the person affected in his respective situation and lifestyle. We support the victim on his way and point out possibilities of self-help, while respecting their freedom of choice.

In a personal conversation with the victim, we show possible solutions to help in each specific case. We offer immediate financial aid and assistance cheques to directly and efficiently handle crime-related emergencies.



Support network guides

Our support system is based on key priorities: personal support, human assistance, care and sympathy. In a confidential talk, we get to know the needs of the victims.

We show victims the different ways in which they can receive support, whilst helping them to reach the right decisions. We refer them to other service providers and help them to deal with the authorities.

Our self-image: we guide and accompany victims through the support network.



Help in the case of material distress

We help to overcome financial emergencies that have arisen due to the offence. We also offer stop-gap assistance when authorities do not provide public-sector services promptly enough. We are not able to render assistance in the form of damages and compensation for pain and suffering.

By issuing assistance cheques we make it possible to quickly and directly contact specialists such as lawyers, therapists, traumatologists and forensic doctors.

We ensure that victims' rights are protected in criminal proceedings and that victim compensation claims are asserted. In certain cases, we can offer support where there are other crime-related legal problems. In the event of legal disputes, we ensure that each victim can be assigned a lawyer at the cost of the state and that he/she can make use of other public services such as legal aid. We acknowledge the limitations of legal counsel ("Rechtsberatungsgesetz").

The victim of a crime decides whether to exercise his/her rights and claims. **Our aim is to enable the person who has been victimized – based on accurate information and without worrying about expenses – to gain the strength and the confidence to face life again.**

We use our funds in compliance with the statutes and are able to provide proof of this at any time.



4. Quality of work

We are familiar with the various types of offences and their consequences, and we are aware of how differently people react to pressure they are subject to. We know of the particular consequences and problems involved for example by domestic violence, stalking and child abuse.

We know how to deal with the stressful impact of criminal offences, the kind of problems they cause, and which type of help can be offered.

We have experience of the time frames in which psychological traumas can develop and always adapt our one-to-one discussions to the particular needs of victims of a crime. We know how negative repercussions can be manifested and treat victims with respect, understanding and the attention that they need.

We work in the network and are familiar with the psychosocial, psychotherapeutic and medical support structures in place.

We know therapists who are trained in traumatology and are qualified to offer therapy which is adapted to each victim's specific situation. We know which doctors and clinics can be contacted for which diseases.

The help and the support are in accordance to the individual need of the victims. We provide material assistance as quickly as possible, taking into account how urgently the help is required.

Victims of crime may reach WEISSER RING by contacting the branch office or calling the victim helpline. We inform victims of the support which we offer, making it easier for them to claim help. All offices contacted ensure that victims are provided with support and are referred to the appropriate case worker immediately. In general, we follow up each victim's request for help within 24 hours.

We talk to victims confidentially on the phone or in person. We also provide an anonymous support service if desired. We offer a visiting service, for which there are no time or place restrictions. The victim chooses where and when to meet up.

In an emergency situation, we are able to provide immediate assistance at the first visit. In general, we decide on additional concrete assistance within three weeks or establish contact within this time frame to clarify details as necessary. If the situation is particularly urgent, we ensure that we reach a decision within three days.

We are familiar with the rules of communication and counselling techniques in particular situations. We are qualified to communicate with victims of crime and all those involved in the discussion. We also aim to enforce the victims' interests.

We know which rights victims are entitled to in criminal proceedings. We know which rights concern victims in a particular situation when dealing with the police, and which rights victims are entitled to in legal proceedings. We are aware of the possibilities of securing legal aid and being granted legal representation for financial assistance.

We know what benefits the Victims Compensation Act offers and the procedure to assert these claims successfully.

We know which services can be obtained through other service providers and can point out the way to find the right ones.

We are familiar with all possible legal provisions within the "Protection against Violence Act" ("Gewaltschutzgesetz") and can give victims information about applications and enforcing their rights.

We reflect on our own work. We maintain a balance between sympathy and distance to ensure that victims have the best possible help. We are able to detach ourselves and organise our work in such a way that the traumas and pressures which we have to deal with do not affect the quality of the assistance we offer.



5. Quality management

The voluntary and professional staff identify themselves with the goals of the association and commit themselves to loyalty and solidarity.

We support one another to provide victims of crime with the best possible help and to create an atmosphere of trust and co-operation. We support and advise each other, and help to strengthen our skills.

For our work to be of a high standard, it is essential that we have a careful selection process to recruit our voluntary victim support workers. The branch office leaders and regional chairmen/chairwomen ensure that workers are personally suited to the work, have adequate organisation skills, and are socially integrated. This involves taking into account the variety of our work and ensuring that victims' diverse needs are met by a range of supporters. Each candidate's aptitudes and eligibility are first assessed during selection interviews. A trial period involving practical experience

and related discussions then helps the recruiters to see if the candidate meets the expectation of a victim support worker.

The branch office leaders ensure that our work is of a high standard by means of regular discussion and self-reflection. They have a methodological approach, for example using case discussion methods and supervision. They always ensure compliance due to our standards and framework conditions, which we continuously develop for our own protection as well as in the interests of health.

Our work is based on successful compulsory and voluntary ongoing training in order to stay abreast of the latest knowledge. The branch offices have specialist workers for specific tasks, issues, or fields of application (e.g. witness support, domestic violence, stalking, sexual abuse, etc.).

In order to fulfil the given data protection rights, we use the latest technology and regularly inform as well as guide all workers to ensure the confidentiality use of data. The same criteria also apply to our victim helpline advisors.

In order to continue developing our support service and effectively disseminate and implement our objectives, we collaborate with other organisations and establishments on the basis of mutual trust, acceptance and appreciation, and we partake in political and social processes.

Help – Counsel – Prevent

Purpose and objective of WEISSER RING:

- Instant assistance to crime victims and their families
- Public advocacy for the improvement of the legal and social situation of the damaged
- Strengthening of the prevention thought
- Support of reparation and offender-victim mediation projects



Victims helpline: 116 006

WEISSE RING can help by:

- Support and personal assistance after the crime
- Accompanying the victim by police, prosecutor and court appointments
- Assistance in dealing with other authorities
- Put the victim in contact with responsible organizations
- Free and freely selectable checks for lawyer and psycho-traumatological initial consultation and for forensic medical examination
- Meeting of attorney costs, in particular
 - to ensure the victims rights in the trial
 - to enforce the rights under the victims compensation act
- In certain cases recovery measures for the victim and their families
- Financial support to bridge crime caused emergencies
- Victims helpline: 116 006



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