

## normal reactions to a crime

"At first, I was shocked and numb. As the weeks went on, I would forget things and lose track of time."

"I became scared of everything, scared to stay home and scared to go out."

"I wondered if I would ever get back to normal."

Some normal reactions to being a victim of a crime include:

- not sleeping or nightmares
- blaming yourself
- not being able to concentrate
- not being able to stay on your own
- worrying about everyday things
- not being able to talk about what happened or not being able to stop talking about what happened
- going over and over in your mind what happened
- feeling no-one really understands
- feeling others blame you for what happened
- feeling people don't believe you

Everyone is affected differently - the important thing is that you get the help you need, when you need it.

Remember, it was not your fault.

Depending on what happened, it will usually take about 6-8 weeks to feel more in control again. For some, it could take a lot longer.

## recovering from a crime

Some things that have helped other victims of crime are:

- taking time to think through what you need
- making your own decisions wherever you can
  - this helps to increase your sense of control again
- not expecting too much of yourself
  - you're already coping with the effects of a crime
- remembering you are still the same person you were before the crime
- doing something each day - big or small - to care for yourself, for example, exercise, seeing a friend, buying a bunch of flowers, making an appointment you need
- keeping notes or a journal
- re-establishing your normal routine as soon as possible

Several important areas for recovering from a crime are:

- talking to someone you trust - talking can help you stop feeling alone and to make sense of what happened.
- increasing your safety
  - increased safety can help reduce your fear.
- getting answers to your questions
  - correct information can help deal with confusion.

You have the right to be treated with courtesy,  
compassion and respect - *Charter of Victims Rights*

## talking to someone

Talking to someone can help you begin to make sense of what happened. However, it is your decision who you talk to about the crime. It is your choice how much you want to talk about the crime at any stage.

Talking to your partner and children lets them know how you are feeling. If they are also affected by the crime, you could ask them who they'd like to talk to.

Talking to family and friends who you can trust can help. Even if they do not understand completely, at least the people you trust will be aware of how you feel.

Your GP can advise you on dealing with stress, sleep problems, anxiety or depression.

If you decide to talk to your employer about the effect of the crime on you, this can be helpful as it allows you and your employer to work out what level of work you can cope with and can assist your return to work. Some people ask their union to assist them.

Seeing a counsellor has helped many victims of crime to make a quicker recovery. For more information about counselling, see page 11.

If you find it difficult to talk to anyone, you may find it useful to ring the Victims Support Line on 9374 3000 or 1800 633 063 (tollfree) or TTY (02) 9374 3175 (for people who use a TTY).

**Remember, you do not need to cope alone.**

date \_\_\_\_\_

How did I cope this week?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One thing that improved was

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My main difficulty at present is

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The thing that helps me most is

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I still need

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Next week, I will try

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_