

VICTIM OF CRIME?

COMMON REACTIONS

Most people who have had their lives disrupted by crime experience normal physical and emotional reactions. Some of the things they may experience include:



Physical

- Difficulty falling asleep or waking often during the night.
- Change in appetite.
- Backaches or stomach aches.
- Headaches.
- Fatigue.

Behavioural

- Crying.
- Need to be alone/or surrounded by others.
- Emotional outbursts.
- Pacing.

Thinking

- Difficulty concentrating.
- Replaying the event over and over in their mind.
- Nightmares.
- Blaming self or others who are not responsible.

Emotional

- anger
- panic
- anxiety
- sadness/withdrawal
- feeling overwhelmed
- fear of being alone
- guilt
- irritability

Some Things That May Help

- Try to return to their usual routine.
- Talk to someone they trust.
- Try to get eight hours sleep per night.
- Eat well-balanced meals at regular times.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sugary foods.
- Drink lots of water.
- Exercise.
- Relax - spend time with the people they love, in places that make them happy.
- Avoid isolation.
- Pace themselves - learn to say NO.
- Don't make any big life changes or decisions.
- Ask for help if things seem overwhelming.

A word about children

Children who have been involved in a traumatic incident need the attention and close physical contact of their parents or caregivers to reassure them of their physical safety.

- Allow them to set their own pace.
- Try to keep routines as normal as possible.

- Encourage them to play and draw - it is a way to cope with stress and anxious feelings.
- Take opportunities to listen and talk to your child.
- Talk about your own reactions with your children.

Practice relaxation techniques with them.

Standards for Victims of Crime in Ontario

Victims should have access to information about:

- Their role in the criminal justice system.
- The services that are there to help.
- How the investigation is progressing.
- What charges were laid or the reason why charges were not laid.
- Any important dates or decisions made by the court.
- Any plea bargaining arrangements.
- Any release conditions.
- Any decision that is made about an accused who is found unfit to stand trial or who is not criminally responsible.
- How to submit a Victim Impact Statement.
- How to access Criminal Compensation.



The Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) can provide you with information about the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) and about how to obtain an application form. V/WAP only assists particularly vulnerable clients in completing the CICB forms, resources permitting. Normal practice is to refer clients to Community Legal Clinics where applicable.

For further information regarding V/WAP and how to contact the nearest office, visit www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/about/vw/cicb.asp and scroll to “Victims and Witnesses” on the left side.

Other links to assist you are:

[Criminal Injuries Compensation Board](#)

1-800-372-7463

Other Resources:

[Victims Crisis Assistance & Referral Services \(English\)](#)