

This brochure is for people who have become victims of crime and those closely associated with them. It outlines simple suggestions to help your recovery and lists services that are available.

NORMAL REACTIONS TO A CRIME

Becoming a victim of a crime can be a distressing life event. It can help victims of crime to know that:

- You may have a range of reactions such as anxiety, fear, nightmares and problems relating to others.
- Not everyone has the same reaction and some people may have a delayed reaction.
- Depending on what happened, it will usually take 6-8 weeks to feel more in control again. For some, it could take a lot longer.
- It is helpful to remember there are different ways to recover from what has happened.
- Seek help as soon as possible after the crime.
- You can talk to someone you trust or choose from the services listed on the back of this brochure.

SOME POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF EXPERIENCING A CRIME

Victims of crime and at times, their family and friends, may experience some of the following effects of a crime.

Physical effects can include:

- feeling tense or jumpy;
- difficulty sleeping;
- nightmares;
- constant tiredness;
- feeling uncoordinated; and
- loss of appetite.

Emotional effects can include:

- feelings of "going crazy";
- sadness, grief or loss;
- anger or irritability; and
- feeling guilty.

Cognitive effects can include:

- poor attention span;
- difficulty making decisions;
- confusion;
- slowed thinking; and
- forgetting details of daily life.

Behavioural effects can include:

- avoiding people or places that remind you of the event;
- using alcohol or drugs to numb your feelings; and
- staying busy to block out thoughts of the crime.

Many of these reactions will fade over a period of weeks, although some might last longer.

SOME WAYS TO COPE WITH THE EFFECTS OF CRIME

- allowing yourself to feel your emotions;
- allowing yourself to feel the pain;
- keeping notes on your progress;
- making daily decisions to regain a feeling of control;
- spending time with others but allowing yourself some time out;
- re-establishing your normal schedule as soon as possible;
- trying to rest, sleep, exercise and eat regularly;
- undertaking daily tasks with care until your stress reduces; and
- consider seeing your doctor or a counsellor for professional help.

IT HELPS NOT TO...

- blame yourself for what happened – it was not your fault;
- bottle up your emotions – find someone you can talk to;
- make life-changing decisions – at least until you feel recovered.

INFORMATION FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF VICTIMS OF CRIME

- If the victim asks for help, you can offer to listen to the victim or give practical assistance.
- Protect the victim's confidentiality and privacy.
- Try to understand the victim's point of view and don't take their anger or confusion personally.
- Let the victim know you are sorry about what has happened and that you do not blame them.
- If the victim is very distressed, try to find professional help from a doctor or counsellor.
- If you become distressed yourself, consider getting help for yourself.
- To get more information about support and rights for victims of crime, contact the Victims Support Line or other services listed in this brochure.

INFORMATION AND RIGHTS FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Charter of Victims Rights gives all victims of crime a number of rights including the right to:

- be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect;
- access to services, depending on your needs;
- protection from the offender where necessary;
- information about investigation of the crime; and
- protection of your privacy.

You may require information and support before attending court and, in some cases, about making a Victim Impact Statement. If the offender is in custody, you may need information about Victims Registers and making a submission concerning the offender. Victims of violent crime may be eligible to apply for Approved Counselling and/or compensation.

For further information, a list of services for victims of crime is included on the back of this brochure.

SOME SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

DoCS HELPLINE

132 111

If you are concerned that a child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused, contact the Department of Community Services helpline.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINE

1800 656 463 (Toll free) • TTY: 1800 671 442

24-hour counselling for women and children affected by domestic violence.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

02) 9542 4029

Information, including education programs, support for victims of road trauma and development of cooperative justice.

HOMICIDE VICTIMS' SUPPORT GROUP

02) 8274 8900 9am-5pm or 1800 191 777 (Toll free - 24 hours)

A support group for individuals who lose a family member as a result of homicide.

MISSION AUSTRALIA COURT SUPPORT SERVICE

02) 9356 0604

Practical and emotional support for victims of crime who are attending court throughout the Sydney metropolitan area.

POLICE

02) 9281 0000

Ask to be put through to your local police station and ask for the officer taking care of your matter.

SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES

Contact the general hospital in your area and ask for the Sexual Assault Unit.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE LEAGUE (VOCAL)

02) 4926 5826

Support for all crime victims in the Hunter region including road trauma, court support, community education and referral.

VICTIMS REGISTERS

02) 8346 1374 Department of Corrective Services

02) 8295 7000 Justice Health

02) 9219 9400 Department of Juvenile Justice

For victims when offenders are in custody.

WITNESS ASSISTANCE SERVICE

02) 9285 8949 or 1800 814 534 (Toll free) • TTY: 02) 9285 8646

Information and support for court cases being tried by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

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Victims Services
Attorney General's
department of nsw

Information & Support for Victims of Crime

24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK

VICTIMS SUPPORT LINE

02) 9374 3000
(Metropolitan area only)

1800 633 063
(Toll free)

Telephone Interpreting Service
131 450

Telephone Typewriter Service
TTY 02) 9374 3175

www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/voc