

Coping with the Effects of Robbery

There is no “right” or “wrong” way to react or feel as a victim. Many victims feel the same things as you do now. You are not alone. It is important to talk about what you have experienced and how you feel with family members, friends or a professional. Getting help from a professional does not imply weakness, but rather may be one proactive way to deal with symptoms of trauma.

The following suggestions may help you cope with the physical and emotional effects you may be experiencing.

- Join a support group for victims of crime.
- If possible, postpone major life changes or decisions.
- Eat well balanced, regular meals and avoid excess caffeine, sugar, fat, alcohol and nicotine to help control your physical symptoms.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Get plenty of rest to help prevent feeling overly tired/stressed.
- Allow time to heal at your own pace.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Record your thoughts, feelings and reactions in a journal.
- Engage in activities such as listening to music, reading a book or participating in creative or physical activities.

Information for Family and Friends of a Crime Victim

The reactions and subsequent needs of people who experience crime are varied. Some people may need private time while others may want to be surrounded by people. Be respectful of your loved one’s wishes. It is important to allow your loved one to talk about his/her experience as needed. Try not to minimize the robbery or his/her reactions to the robbery. Offer assistance and provide emotional and physical support as needed.

REMEMBER: Recovery from trauma is a process. Individuals who were not physically harmed during a robbery may still be traumatized by the event. Each person heals in his/her own way and time. Awareness and understanding are crucial in order to cope effectively with the robbery.

A Note to Parents and Other Caretakers

Children may be impacted by this event due to being present during the robbery, witnessing actions related to it, and/or having a loved one who was there. Like adults, children’s reactions to trauma vary. You can support your child by encouraging him/her to talk about his/her feelings and concerns, as well as reinforcing his/her safety and the safety of those he/she cares about. Your Victim Specialist can provide you with additional information and resources to support your child during this time.

Formulating a Plan to Return to Work

You may be apprehensive about returning to work. Thinking of ways to minimize this apprehension and discussing them with your employer may improve your first day back to work. Some temporary changes you may want to consider include having a friend drive you to work and/or working an alternate position, location, and/or shift.

Customers may ask about the robbery. The media may be interested in speaking with you. Planning ahead of time a short response to these kinds of inquiries may be helpful. Remember: you do not have to talk about your experience with them. In some cases, you may be advised by law enforcement not to discuss the robbery because it is an active investigation. You should consult with your employer about how you intend to respond to inquiries from customers and/or the media.

Victim Compensation

If the robbery involved injury or threat of injury, you may be eligible for reimbursement by your state’s crime victim compensation program for certain out-of-pocket expenses that are related to the robbery, such as medical or counseling expenses or lost wages. To be eligible, the robbery must have been reported to the police and you must cooperate throughout the criminal justice process. Your Victim Specialist can help determine if you are eligible and can assist you in filling out the compensation application.

Resources for Information

If you have questions about the status of the investigation, the judicial process or if you need assistance with counseling referrals or other services, contact your FBI Victim Specialist who is listed on the back of this brochure. Your employer may have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which provides counseling support. Speaking with a counselor can be very effective for many victims of crime. If you are interested in obtaining support through EAP, speak with your manager or a Human Resources representative. Your Victim Specialist can help you locate other resources if your company does not provide EAP support or if you would prefer to locate a counselor elsewhere.

You will also find national resource information listed below.

Federal Bureau of Investigation

www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm

National Center for Victims of Crime

1-800-FYI-CALL or 1-800-394-2255
www.ncvc.org

National Organization for Victim Assistance

1-800-TRY-NOVA or 1-800-879-6682
www.try-nova.org

Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center

1-800-627-6872
TTY-1-877-712-9279
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ovcres/welcome.html

Introduction

Emotional reactions that many victims of crime experience include: fear; startling easily; guilt; anger; feeling vulnerable; isolation; moodiness; difficulty concentrating; confusion; and/or sadness.

Physical reactions that many victims of crime experience include: headaches; stomach aches; body aches; change in appetite; difficulty sleeping or nightmares; chronic fatigue; and/or aggravation of existing medical conditions.

It is important to realize that these are normal feelings, behaviors and reactions to an abnormal event.

IF THE ABOVE REACTIONS PERSIST, PLEASE SEEK PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION .

Your Rights

Victims of Crime are accorded certain rights under 42 United States Code, Section 10607 and 18 United States Code, Section 3771.

If you have questions about your rights as a victim or if you feel your rights have been violated and you would like to file a complaint, please ask your FBI Victim Specialist for assistance.

As a victim of the robbery of a financial institution, it is important to realize that individuals often experience trauma-related symptoms in the aftermath. Even if you were not directly confronted during the robbery, you may experience reactions from exposure to the robbery. Like many other crimes, robbery usually has a rippling effect upon family members, friends, co-workers and others.

People react differently to tragic events. These reactions may be immediate or delayed while coping with your victimization. You may not have any specific reactions related to the robbery.

You also may experience symptoms that are physical and/or emotional. You may find that you react to sights, sounds, smells, and textures that were present at the time of the robbery. If you have been exposed to trauma or have been victimized in the past, you may find yourself experiencing feelings related to these earlier events.

Other factors that may affect your response include:

- Your support system (friends, family, and/or professionals)
- Healthy coping skills
- The degree of violence you witnessed or experienced
- Your proximity to the robbery
- Any current or recent losses or stress

Limited Confidentiality Statement

Your Victim Specialist is here to assist you as you go through the criminal justice process and is working as part of a team with the FBI Special Agent and personnel from the U.S. Attorney's Office. Discussions that you have with your Victim Specialist may not be considered completely confidential. As part of the team, there may be times when your Victim Specialist needs to share information you provide with the other team members. If you have questions about limited confidentiality, contact your Victim Specialist for clarification.

The FBI Office for Victim Assistance is committed to providing you and your family with the most appropriate services to assist in reducing the effects of trauma. Your Victim Specialist is highly trained to assess your needs and link you to the best resources available. It is important that you work closely with your Victim Specialist. Your Victim Specialist can assist in making your experience with the criminal justice process a smooth one.

Important Contact Numbers

FBI Victim Specialist

Name:

Phone:

FBI Special Agent

Name:

Phone:



Federal Bureau of Investigation
Office for Victim Assistance
J. Edgar Hoover Building, Room 3329
935 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington D.C. 20535
(202) 324-3000
www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/victimassist/home.htm

Preparation of this brochure was supported in part by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this brochure are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Office for Victim Assistance



Help for
Victims
of Bank
Robbery