

If you have been the victim of a crime it is very common and in fact quite normal to experience a range of physical, emotional and social reactions to the crime.

These reactions are the signs and symptoms of stress and are normal ways that people cope after a traumatic event.

The reactions may last for a few days, weeks, months or longer. The reactions will vary from person to person and will change over time. For example, there will be days you feel you are coping well and other days when you feel you cannot cope with your normal daily routine.

It is important that you understand that your reactions to the crime are normal and that it will take time and support to help them pass. You may also require assistance from a counsellor if you are concerned about the intensity of your reactions.

## Common Reactions that Crime Victims Experience

### Physical

- Panic
- Nervousness
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Flashbacks
- Upset stomach
- Trouble sleeping e.g. nightmares
- Dizziness
- Uncoordinated
- Shaky hands
- Appetite change e.g. loss of appetite, over eating

### Emotional

- Sadness
- Guilt
- Crying
- Depression
- Scared
- Numbness/shock
- Can't stop thinking about it
- Suspicious
- Worried
- Mood swings
- Feeling abandoned
- Memory problems
- Anger/frustration
- Feeling isolated
- Confused - can't make decisions
- Forgetful/unable to concentrate

### Social

- Avoiding people
- "Can't be bothered" attitude
- Financial loss
- Conflict with family/friends
- Loss of confidence
- Withdrawal
- Loss of control over life
- Abuse of alcohol/drugs
- Problems at work/school
- Unable to go out alone

*This fact sheet has been developed to provide general information to victims of crime. It is not intended as a replacement for medical, therapeutic or legal advice. If you have particular concerns please contact your general practitioner, counsellor or Victim Support Service.*

## Remember

- You have experienced a stressful event
- You have been under enormous stress
- These reactions are normal and temporary
- Try not to be too hard on yourself
- Give yourself time to recover and be good to yourself
- Avoid doing anything that makes you feel uncomfortable or places you under more stress
- Talk to someone you can trust about what you are going through
- Try to keep up regular routines e.g. work, study etc.
- Eat well balanced and regular meals
- Find time to exercise, it is a great stress release
- Try to relax and rest e.g. find a peaceful place
- Avoid making dramatic life changes
- Make decisions for yourself, you need to regain control of your life
- Pamper yourself regularly - especially on those “bad days”
- Monitor your drug/alcohol intake
- If feelings and reactions become unbearable or too intense seek assistance from a professional counsellor

## Further Information

If you would like more information, please contact Victim Support Service on (08) 8231 5626 or view our website at [www.victimsa.org](http://www.victimsa.org)