

How do you know if you've been affected by crime?

A crime can often affect more than just the direct victim. Witnesses of the crime and family members of a victim can also be harmed. It's important to know that support is available to anyone affected by violent crime in Victoria.

This fact sheet will help you decide whether you have been a victim of crime, explain feelings you might experience, and provide details of services that may help you manage the effects of crime.

Am I a victim of crime?

A victim of crime is a person who has suffered harm because of a criminal act. The harm can be physical injury, emotional harm or financial loss.

For example, a person injured in a violent attack or someone who has experienced a sexual assault or robbery is a victim of crime. Family members of a person injured or killed because of a crime can also be victims of that crime. It's also common for people who witness a crime to suffer emotional distress.

Why do I feel this way?

Being a victim of crime affects people in many different ways, and every person's reaction to crime is unique. Usually, people who have experienced serious crimes immediately feel shocked, fearful or angry. Later, it is normal for some victims to experience depression or anxiety.

These reactions are a natural part of dealing with a traumatic event. In most cases they are temporary. With support from family, friends and colleagues, most people recover from the effects of the incident within a few weeks or months. For other people, the recovery process can be more difficult. The harm may have occurred over a long period of time, or a crime may have been very traumatic.

Getting help

If you've been a victim of crime, support is important to help you get back on track. Family and friends can be a great source of comfort, but sometimes it might not be enough.

If you need help with any ongoing effects of crime, the Victims Assistance and Counselling Program has trained staff all over Victoria that can provide practical support to you, your family and others affected by the crime.

To find out more about the Victims Assistance and Counselling Program, call the Victims of Crime Helpline.

The Victims of Crime Helpline is a free and confidential service for people affected by violent crime. Trained Victim Support Officers will listen to your situation, provide information and support, and can put you in touch with other services that can help.

The Victims of Crime Helpline provides:

- advice and support
- information about your rights
- information about the criminal justice system
- connections with other support services
- information about applying for financial assistance.

Victims of Crime Helpline

1800 819 817

8am to 11pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.
(free call, except from mobile phones)

Ask a question by SMS – 0427 767 891

Email: vsa@justice.vic.gov.au

www.justice.vic.gov.au/victimsofcrime

We are National Relay Service friendly.