



Attorney General's Office of Victim Services

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Coping in the Aftermath of Crime

In the aftermath of a crime, violent or not, victims are impacted physically, financially, socially, and emotionally. Each victim's reaction to his or her victimization will vary; however, there are some common impacts that crime has on victims. Remember that no part of this experience is "normal", thus there are no "normal" reactions. Keep in mind that your feelings are valid, and there is no "right" way to cope.

Physical Impacts

The obvious effects of your victimization are the physical injuries you may have suffered. You may experience after-effects of your injuries in the form of other physical symptoms following the crime. These may include:

- Headaches
- Lack of energy
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Heightened sensory awareness
- Skin rashes
- Exaggerated startle reflex
- Fatigue
- Weight loss or gain, increased or decreased appetite

Financial Impacts

At the time of the crime, your money or other possessions may have been taken or your property damaged. You may have expenses stemming from the crime, such as medical expenses or emergency relocation expenses. There are resources that may be available to you to help recover money or help pay expenses, such as Restitution or the Victim Compensation Program.

Social Impacts

- Others may respond negatively to your victimization, including your physical, financial and emotional problems.
- You may find yourself withdrawing from family and friends and isolating yourself.
- You may also find yourself becoming disinterested in activities that you previously valued.

Mental Impacts

- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty showing emotion
- Confusion
- Intrusive thoughts
- Mentally reliving the crime
- Forgetfulness or memory lapses
- Inability to make decisions
- Fantasies about harming the offender

Emotional Impacts

There are some common emotions that many victims experience in the aftermath of a crime, and they may come with a lot of questions. Victims experience these emotions differently and may be short or long-term. See the "Tips for Recovery" section later in this document to help deal with some of these emotions and questions.

- Fear
- Embarrassment
- Despair/self-pity
- Guilt/shame
- Irritability
- Flashbacks
- Mood swings
- Anger

Tips for Recovery

It is important, in the aftermath of a crime, to keep your healing process in mind.

- *Remain in touch with friends and loved ones.* Often, loved ones do not know what to say or how to react after a crime. Because of this, you may feel the need to pull away. You can help the situation by letting your friends and family what you need from them in order for you to cope.
- *Return to your regular activities.* While there is no timeline for recovery after a crime, it may be helpful for you to maintain as much "normalcy" as possible. If you return to your daily activities little by little, like working, driving, spending time with friends and family, etc., you will begin to regain self-confidence and your emotional equilibrium.

- *Get information about your case.* You can be as involved as you want to be in your case, with the help of your Victim Advocate. You have the right to be heard at select hearings, confer with the investigator and prosecutor, and attend hearings, among many other things. You may choose to do any or all of these things to promote your healing process.
- *Consider seeking professional assistance if things do not seem to be getting better in the weeks following the crime.* A strong emotional response to a crime is not unusual; however, if you do not feel that you are healing or are feeling overwhelmed by what has happened, it might be a good idea to consult with an experienced counselor who will be able to assess the severity of your symptoms, provide you with feedback or suggestions, and give appropriate counsel. To find professional assistance, call 211 Arizona at 877-211-8661 for resources.

What We Can Do

Should your case be investigated and/or prosecuted by the Arizona Attorney General's Office, a victim advocate from the Office of Victim Services (OVS) will be assigned to your case. The advocate will notify you, by phone or in writing, of your case status, act as your liaison between you and the investigator/prosecutor, and be your guide through the criminal justice system. The advocate can also refer you to other resources for professional assistance, Victim Compensation, and many other things.

Resources to Help You

211 Arizona

877-211-8661

24 hour Crisis Line

1-866-666-4889