

Stress Reactions to Crisis

People who are victims of crime have experienced a crisis. For some people this can cause strong emotional reactions. Some people report almost no reaction to being a victim of crime while others report a variety of physical, emotional and social responses. These may appear a few hours or even days after the event. A crime victim may experience feelings unlike anything they have felt before. It is important to remember that these reactions are **normal reactions to an abnormal event.**

The following are possible reactions that you may experience after a crisis:

Emotional Reactions

- ◆ fear
- ◆ anxiety
- ◆ depression
- ◆ grief
- ◆ confusion
- ◆ shock
- ◆ easily startled
- ◆ numbness
- ◆ difficulty concentrating
- ◆ guilt
- ◆ anger
- ◆ moodiness
- ◆ exhaustion
- ◆ difficulty making decisions

Physical Symptoms

- ◆ restlessness
- ◆ headaches
- ◆ upset stomach
- ◆ changes in appetite
- ◆ nightmares
- ◆ sleep problems
- ◆ tenseness
- ◆ loss of energy
- ◆ sexual problems
- ◆ shaking
- ◆ dizziness

There is no “right “ or “wrong” way to react or feel as a victim. Victims have a wide variety of emotional reactions. **You are not alone and you are not crazy!** It helps to talk to family members, friends or a counselor who is trained about the ways in which people react to crime. Sometimes family members and friends can also benefit from counseling. They can learn ways to help you feel better after the crisis.

Helping Yourself

Things to do to take care of yourself:

- ◆ Realize that you are in need of extra TLC for a while
- ◆ Eat well balanced and regular meals
- ◆ Resist the urge to use alcohol or other drugs
- ◆ Surround yourself with people who care about you
- ◆ Talk about your feelings
- ◆ Maintain a normal schedule
- ◆ Record your thoughts and feelings in a journal
- ◆ Take time to relax
- ◆ Read and listen to music
- ◆ Get physically active
- ◆ Avoid making impulsive decisions

When a Loved One Has Been a Victim of Crime

- ◆ ***Let them talk about the incident as much as they want or need to.***
- ◆ ***Offer concrete support.***
Fixing a meal or driving them to court can provide relief.
- ◆ ***Don't tell them they were "lucky".***
Telling someone they were lucky discounts their feelings and suggests that you believe they are overreacting to the situation.
- ◆ ***Don't tell them what you would have done.***
None of us know what we would have, should have, or could have done in that situation. The victim survived the crime so they must have done something right.
- ◆ ***Be sensitive to their moods.***
It is normal for crime victims to experience mood swings. They may feel a wide variety of emotions ranging from fear and anxiety, to sadness and numbness.
- ◆ ***Be there.*** Frequently crime victims are not sure what they need, but find the presence of a loved one comforting. A call or a hug can do wonders.

Remember, what happened was not your fault.

Crime can happen to anyone no matter how careful they are.

No one deserves to be a victim of crime.

Help is available.

**All you have to do is call the
Shelby County Crime Victims Center,
901- 222-3950**