

Common Reactions after a Crime

“No one was injured”

Those words are often heard after a crime, usually in reference to no physical injuries. However it is very common, and in fact quite normal, for victims of crime to experience a range of physical, emotional and social reactions.

For many it is about rebuilding trust and feeling safe again; of overcoming the fear of perhaps becoming a victim again.

It can be about learning to live normally and happily again; to sleep well and to not have life controlled by constant reminders of the traumatic experience they have faced. For many this is no easy feat.

It has been said ‘out of sight, out of mind’ but not seeing an injury does not mean the injury isn’t real. It can often make recovery much more challenging because the victim doesn’t always recognise the connection to the crime.

Common reactions can include, but are not limited to, depression, changes in mood, memory problems, sadness and crying, fearfulness, a sense of isolation and abandonment (no one understands), unable to stop thinking about the crime (constant replaying of the event/flashbacks), nightmares and insomnia.

Crime impacts not only on the individual but can also impact on family and friends. Severe reactions can place insurmountable pressure on victims and may result in being unable to work and relationship breakdowns. The effects are not necessarily short lived. A crime which can take moments to commit may take months or years to recover from.

Victim Support Service is able to assist victims in their recovery. Talking is a helpful tool for many people – it allows people to work through their concerns and learn ways of combating fears so that life can continue on, without the crime controlling the future.

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