

As an employer you may become aware of an employee who has been a victim of crime either in your work place (e.g. armed hold-up situation) or in their personal life. This can affect their normal functioning at work.

Possible Reactions

People who have been the victim of a crime may experience a range of reactions that are a normal response to a traumatic event, including:

- Physical Reactions –
e.g. headaches & nausea
- Behavioural Reactions –
e.g. withdrawn & agitated
- Cognitive Reactions –
e.g. sleep difficulty, flashbacks, poor
concentration & forgetfulness
- Emotional Reactions –
e.g. denial, anger, guilt, depression & fear



These reactions may be noticed immediately after the crime or may be delayed, sometimes occurring months later. Reactions may last a few days up to a few months or more.

If the incident was specific to the workplace, you may also notice the following:

- a difficulty in returning to work
- concern and fear that the incident will re-occur
- difficulty concentrating and completing normal tasks
- sadness/depression
- anger/irritability

These reactions are normal given the stress that the person has been under.

Practical Help

As an employer, it may be helpful for you to keep the following things in mind:

- Acknowledge the trauma caused by the crime and offer your support.
- Has the person been given a formal opportunity to debrief (talk through) what happened and their feelings/thoughts/needs?
- Does the person need time off? (for psychological recovery, talking with the police, doctor or counselling appointments etc.)
- If the incident occurred in the workplace, have adequate safety mechanisms been put into place?
- Acknowledge that the employee dealt with the incident as best he/she could.
- Avoid making dismissive or blaming comments such as “You think that’s bad, what about what happened to me...” or “You should have...”

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.

If you are concerned about the time it is taking for an employee to recover:

- remember that recovery can take some time
- if appropriate, approach the person and let them know that you are concerned about them
- encourage appropriate supports in the workplace for them
- provide some information about what the person has been through and what their likely reactions might be

For Faster Recovery

If a person is given adequate support and assistance soon after the crime, they are more likely to have a faster recovery.

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