

Normal Reactions to an Abnormal Event

Crime victims often suffer physical and psychological trauma as a result of experiencing an event that is beyond the scope of their everyday reality. Each person reacts to this trauma in his or her own way. Keep in mind that you are a normal person having normal reactions – the only thing that is abnormal is the situation you have just experienced. Listed below are some of the reactions you might experience. Although any of the following reactions might occur, people differ in terms of the intensity and frequency of such reactions.

- Shock and numbness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Change in eating habits (not eating, over-eating)
- Confusion and difficulty focusing or concentrating
- Intrusive thoughts (thoughts that won't go away, memories of the event)
- Anxiety and depression; increased fear level
- Anger & irritability
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Fatigue
- Dreams/nightmares
- Withdrawal and isolation
- Avoiding anything that reminds you of the event (attempting to “forget”)
- Hyper-vigilance (jumpy/nervous)
- Feeling powerless; loss of control
- Physical complaints (headaches, stomach aches, etc)
- Survivor guilt (guilt over feeling glad it wasn't you or your family members)

Remember...**There is no right or wrong way to react!!**

Things that might help:

- Try to return to your normal routine as much as possible.
- Do not make major decisions or changes right now (unless they are to ensure your safety).
- Eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water.
- Get plenty of rest/sleep – consult your doctor if you have trouble sleeping.
- Talk about your feelings and concerns with family and friends.
- Don't isolate yourself.
- Exercise, take a walk, do anything physical – you'll sleep better.
- Avoid using alcohol; it can act as a depressant.
- Avoid overuse of caffeine; it is a stimulant and could increase anxiety
- The more you talk about how you're feeling, the better you will feel.
- Seek the help of a professional who can help you deal with the effects of your experience.

The Victim Services Program is here to help you through this. Call us at 972/721-6551 to schedule an appointment or to talk by phone.