

Coping with Victimization



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

**Victims of Crime
Compensation Board**

50 Park Place
Newark, New Jersey 07102
Tel. 1-877-NJ VCCB1
(1-877-658-2221)
www.njvictims.org

Time and the support from loved ones is critical while victims recover from the aftermath of crime

Common Victim Reaction

You are only human. Your feelings are normal and natural, even though they seem unusual. Victims, family and friends may feel overwhelmed by their reactions to crime. Shock, numbness, denial, disbelief, fear, anger, guilt, distrust, frustration and loneliness are realities victims must face.

There is no right or wrong way to feel. Family members who have been victimized experience unique emotions at varying points in their recovery.

Anger is a common reaction. Victims often feel angry at the offender, the disruption in their life, the criminal justice system and even towards those closest to the victim. Try to direct the anger where it belongs— at the offender. Talking can be a useful method to release these feelings.

Grief, sorrow, depression and fear frequently follow loss or injury. Grief and sorrow can last for a lengthy period of time— be patient and know that what victims are feeling is okay. Victims may face fears of staying at home, leaving home or trusting anyone. With passing time, these fears will lessen.

Your feelings may become heightened at various times. Certain events may cause varying emotions to return to the victim. Observing someone who looks like the criminal, hearing sounds that remind the victim of the crime, a song or an anniversary date that has special significance may cause a flood of emotions.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

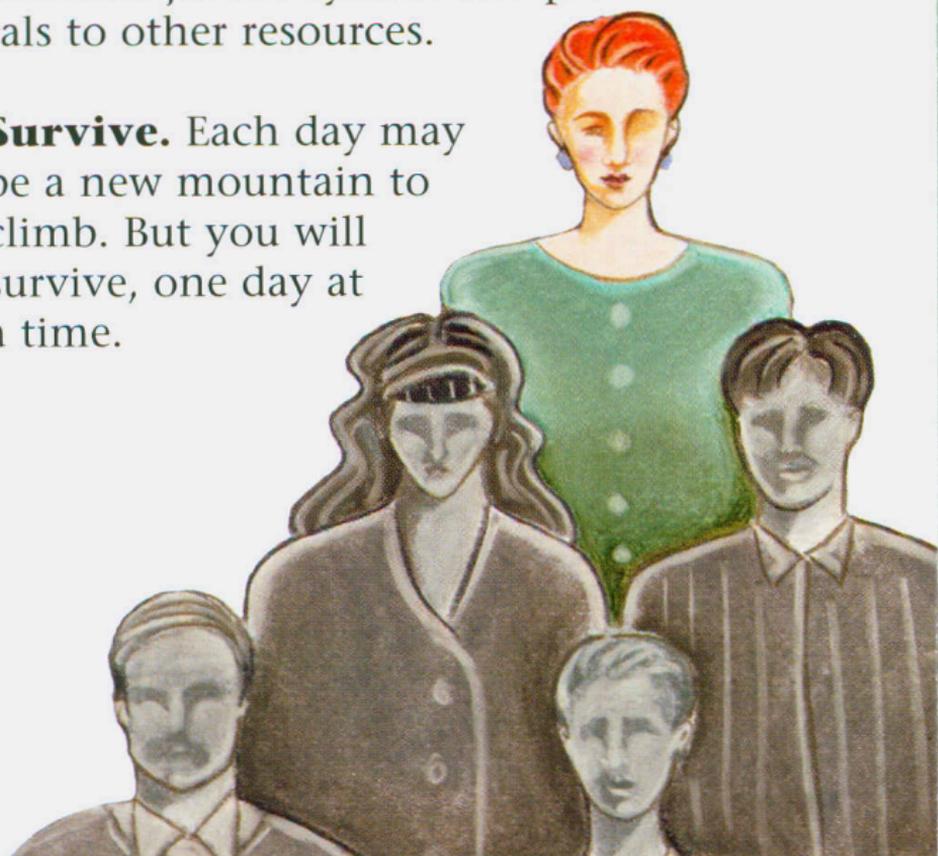
Talking about the crime experience is often the best treatment for healing. Friends and family need to listen to the story—often time repeatedly. Victims need non-judgmental support and assurance to recover at their own pace.

Take steps to ensure a sense of well being. Install new locks, a security system or additional lighting. Learn personal safety techniques or carry personal protections to increase security.

Don't isolate yourself. Interaction with others may speed your recovery. Friends and family may be able to provide a more reasonable sense of reality to the situation.

Seek Support. Talk with a victim support service provider who can offer support, factual information about the criminal justice system and provide referrals to other resources.

Survive. Each day may be a new mountain to climb. But you will survive, one day at a time.



Suggestions for supporting victims of crime

- Encourage victims to express their feelings.
- Be a listener.
- Validate victims' feelings and confirm that their confusing emotions are normal.
- Tell them you are sorry about the incident.
- Provide mutual support to family and friends who may also share a wide range of feelings.
- Offer to attend criminal justice proceedings with victims.
- Express that they are not to blame for what happened.
- Try not to project your personal feelings—everyone responds to crisis in their own way in their own time.
- Develop a list of resource numbers for additional assistance and request outside help if needed.
- Don't use the word "closure."
- Don't say, "I understand just how you feel." You don't.

If we can help you, call our Victim Advocacy Unit at the New Jersey Victims of Crime Compensation Board.

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People who
have not **personally**
experienced **victimization**
can never fully **understand**
the painful **reality** and
consequences of being
a **victim**. No one ever expects
to **become** a victim.

Often **victims** are left
with many **puzzling** emotions.

New Jersey Victim's Rights Constitutional Amendment

Article 1, Paragraph 22

A victim of crime shall be treated with fairness, compassion and respect by the criminal justice system. A victim of crime shall not be denied the right to be present at public judicial proceedings except when, prior to completing testimony as a witness, the victim is properly sequestered in accordance with law or the rules governing the courts of the State of New Jersey.



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