

## *If You are a Victim of Robbery...* STTAR Center

Robbery is taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of someone by force or by threat of force or violence. If a weapon is used, it is called armed robbery and is usually considered by the police and courts to be more serious than robbery without a weapon. Robbery involves not only the loss of property but also the threat or use of violence.

Because victims encounter robbers face-to-face or in close proximity, robbery victims often feel a total and immediate loss of control. When a weapon is involved, the sense of helplessness and the fear of death can be strong, which can lead to both short-term and long-term trauma reactions.

Most property stolen during a robbery is never recovered, and the financial losses can be substantial. If the stolen property has unique or sentimental value, the victim's emotional reactions can be very intense.

A robbery can be a violent, life-threatening situation. As a robbery victim, you may have many feelings, thoughts, and reactions to what has happened.

You may feel angry at the robber or the police and court system for not doing enough. You may feel intense sadness and grief over possessions that you have lost. You may fear that the robber will return or that another robbery might occur. You may feel guilt that perhaps something you did led to the robbery, even though you did nothing wrong.

You may feel nervous in crowds or very suspicious when you are alone with someone you do not know. You may have nightmares or flashbacks about the robbery. You may find that you startle more easily at little noises or abrupt movements. You also may feel vulnerable and that you are not in control of your life.

How victims react to robbery varies from person to person. Your reaction may be immediate or delayed. Although you may feel as if you are the only one experiencing these feelings and that no one else can understand what you are going through, your reactions are normal. Some reactions may decrease within a few days; others may continue for some time or resurface after being triggered by another event.

It is important for you to deal with and resolve your crisis reactions at your own pace. Just as everyone reacts to a crisis differently, not everyone reassembles his or her life in the same way or within the same time-frame. Many victims say it is helpful to talk with others about the robbery experience and about their crisis reactions. As victims talk about their robbery, over time they put the incident into perspective and begin to cope with its consequences.

Adapted from "Robbery Victimization," Office for Victims of Crime, February 2002. [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc)

