

Coping with Trauma and Victimization of a Break and Enter

- If you have been the victim of a break and enter, you may be experiencing feeling of trauma and wondering if your reactions are normal. It is very important for you to deal with and resolve your trauma reactions at your own pace.
- Seek information and advice on ways to make your home more safe (i.e. installing new locks on doors and windows, keeping lights on at night and when you are away etc.).
- Many victims say it is helpful to talk with others about the experience and about their crisis reactions. As victims talk about the crime, over time they put the incident in to perspective and begin to cope with its consequences.
- Look to family, friends, and coworkers for support. Talk to them about how you are feeling.
- Maintain a normal schedule including well balanced meals, getting 8 hours of sleep a night, and regular exercise.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol. They may seem to help block out your feelings or memories, but they don't help you deal with the pain or the memories.
- Seek help from your local Victim Services Unit who can offer you information, resources, and referrals to other services in the community.
- If charges are laid against an individual (s), you have the right to seek restitution from the offender. Your application must be forwarded to the court before sentencing, as it is the judge who orders the offender to pay you back for any out of pocket expenses as a result of the crime, including items stolen, wages lost for time taken off work, and damages done during the break-in. You may also want to fill out a Victim Impact Statement, which is also used at sentencing to let the judge know how the crime has affected you.
- If you were injured as a result of the break and enter, you may also qualify for a program called Financial Benefits, which may compensate you for your injuries, if you sought medical attention.



Some common reaction to a Break and Enter (may be immediate or delayed):

- Shock** Your immediate reaction to a break and enter may be shock. You may feel stunned or dazed or numb. You may feel cut off from your feelings, or from what is going on around you.
- Denial** You can't accept what has happened and so you may pretend that it hasn't. Some people may think you are being strong or don't care what has happened.
- Anger** At the thief or the police or the court system for not doing enough. You may also be angry that this has happened and that you no longer feel in control or safe in your home. You may be angry at the inconvenience this has caused (replacing stolen items, insurance claims etc.).
- Sadness & Grief** Over possessions that have been stolen or damaged; especially items of sentimental value to you.
- Fear** That the thief will return to your home and break in again, or fears for your personal safety.
- Guilt** That perhaps something you did led to the break in, even though you did nothing wrong.
- Nervousness** In crowds or very suspicious when you are alone, with someone you don't know, or someone calls or comes to your door.
- Flashbacks** Reliving the break in over and over in your mind; you feel like you will never get over the event.
- Anxiety** You may find that you startle more easily at little noises or abrupt movements. Keep in mind that children may also be affected by the break in. They may experience the same reactions as yourself, as well as other emotions. Children need to be reassured that they and their home are safe.

If you have been the victim of a break in, either to your home or business and would like assistance, please call Red Deer City Victim Services at (403) 406-2345.

We are here to help.

