



## It may take time

Family and friends of victims are often the best source of support. You are in a good position to help.

It is important that you don't expect too much of them, as this may hinder their recovery and add to the pressure they are already feeling.

Your friend or family member will need to heal in their own way and in their own time.

## You are important too

You may also have your own reactions. It may be important that you find someone to talk to as well.

In addition to supporting victims of crime, the Victim Support and Child Witness Service is also available to family and friends. Call 1800 818 988 or contact your nearest office for help. A list of Victim Support and Child Witness Service offices is printed on the back of this brochure.

## Where you can find the Victim Support and Child Witness Service

### PERTH

**Victim Support and  
Child Witness Service**  
Level 2, District Court Building  
500 Hay Street  
PERTH WA 6000  
**Phone** 9425 2850  
**Fax** 9425 4428  
**Freecall** 1800 818 988  
**Email** vss@justice.wa.gov.au

### COUNTRY

**Albany**  
Albany Courthouse  
184 Stirling Terrace  
ALBANY WA 6330  
**Phone** 9845 5222

**Broome**  
Office 2, 9 Napier Street  
BROOME WA 6725  
**Phone** 9192 6575

**Bunbury**  
Ground Floor, Bunbury Courthouse  
65 Wittenoom Street  
BUNBURY WA 6230  
**Phone** 9781 4294

**Carnarvon**  
2 Rushton Street  
CARNARVON WA 6701  
**Phone** 9941 4070

**Derby**  
Derby Courthouse  
Loch Street  
DERBY WA 6728  
**Phone** 9191 2274

**Esperance**  
Esperance Courthouse  
100 Dempster Street  
ESPERANCE WA 6450  
**Phone** 9071 6318

**Victims of Crime**  
**Website** [www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au](http://www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au)

**Department of the Attorney General**  
**Phone** 13 67 57  
**Website** [www.dotag.wa.gov.au](http://www.dotag.wa.gov.au)

### PEEL DISTRICT

Rockingham Justice Complex  
15-17 Whitfield Street  
ROCKINGHAM WA 6168  
**Phone** 9527 7699

**Geraldton**  
Geraldton Courthouse  
Marine Terrace  
GERALDTON WA 6530  
**Phone** 9964 4816

**Kalgoorlie**  
Goldfields Centrecare  
7 Dugan Street  
KALGOORLIE WA 6430  
**Phone** 9091 1833

**Karratha**  
Karratha Courthouse  
Balmoral Road  
KARRATHA WA 6714  
**Phone** 9143 1877

**Kununurra**  
28 Banksia Street  
KUNUNURRA WA 6743  
**Phone** 9166 5000

**Northam**  
Northam Courthouse  
118 Wellington Street  
NORTHAM WA 6401  
**Phone** 9622 7017

**Port Hedland**  
South Hedland Justice Complex  
Hawke Place  
SOUTH HEDLAND WA 6722  
**Phone** 9172 9307

# How Can I Help?

When a family member or  
friend is a victim of crime

***It is often difficult for family and friends to understand the impact a criminal act can have on a victim. At this time, it is important that victims are supported by people they know and trust.***

The Victim Support Service has a selection of brochures for victims, including:

- Preparing a Victim Impact Statement
- Special Witness Status
- Court Support
- Victim Support Service
- Family Violence Service
- Child Witness Service
- How Can I Help - When a family member or friend is a victim of crime

### **How can I help?**

Even if they have not been physically injured or directly threatened during a criminal act, some people will react severely to what others think is a relatively minor event.

Victims are often overwhelmed by strong emotions and reactions, leaving them feeling vulnerable and out of control. Their anger and fear may be misdirected at loved ones and friends at times, but gentle understanding on your part can be most useful.

### **What are the common reactions?**

People's reactions are different. We all have individual and unique ways of managing the unexpected. People who experience trauma do recover but it may take them some time. Normal reactions to traumatic situations include:

- feeling numb
- feeling helpless and having no control over one's life
- experiencing disturbed sleep and nightmares
- nervousness, or feelings of anxiety or panic
- poor concentration
- physical symptoms like nausea and headaches
- detachment and withdrawal from people or activities
- increased irritability
- reduced sex drive
- angry outbursts
- loss of confidence
- impaired decision making and judgement.

### **How long will the reactions last?**

Some people will manage their reactions within a couple of days, while others may take weeks or months before they regain control of their lives.

Keep a look-out for any strong reactions. If any of the reactions listed above last for longer than four days, encourage the victim to contact the nearest Victim Support and Child Witness Service office for assistance.

### **What can I do?**

As a support person, you can discuss your concerns about a family member or friend with a Victim Support Service counsellor.

Some useful tips to provide support to a friend or family member who has been a victim of crime are:

- Recognise that people's reactions will vary.
- Let them talk about their experience of the event and their feelings and fears. They may need to do this over and over again.
- Listen sympathetically, even if you think they are over-reacting. You do not need to offer solutions, just listen.
- Be aware that telling stories about your own or someone else's experience can make the victim feel that their situation is trivial or that they are not managing adequately.
- Providing practical support is invaluable. For example, help with shopping or preparing meals.
- Encourage them to establish normal routines at a pace they can manage and to participate in activities with others.
- Regaining control of their lives is important. Be careful not to become too protective. Help them to act on decisions they have made.
- Be prepared for some uncharacteristic behaviour. This is due to stress and is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.
- Be patient with them if simple decision making and tolerance seem to be affected.
- Don't be too harsh as they may be sensitive to criticism.
- Try not to take their emotional reactions personally, even though they may be difficult on you.