

Judicial System

For many, this may be the first involvement with law enforcement or the judicial system. It's very common for people to expect what they have seen on television or movies to apply to their current circumstances. Unfortunately, these expectations are often unrealistic or a distorted snapshot of how things truly operate.

Texas has laws and regulations in place aimed at protecting victims. For cases involving prosecution, court advocates can provide you with information, education, and support that will help reduce fears and uncertainties.

Criminal case resolution by plea agreement is a practice that is often utilized. Through both negotiation and agreement, this approach to resolution can prevent the need for testifying in court.

Education and information regarding how the judicial system operates can assist victims and their family in the reduction of trauma.

Benefits of Counseling

Some of the benefits of seeking counseling are:

- Reviewing the incident and processing the event can help you clarify what actually occurred.
- Legal and judicial decisions can be discussed and utilized as part of the promotion of healing and resolution.
- Counseling can help develop coping skills and strategies—allowing for the continuance of school, work or relationships.
- Establishment of a support network can help to decrease the negative physical, psychological and emotional effects that often result from traumatic experiences.

You can utilize the traumatic experiences as an opportunity to build and practice assertiveness, confidence, and even protective instinct skills.

Who can help?

The Travis County Sheriff's Office Victim Services Unit can assist you with information regarding your case status, Victims' Rights, Crime Victim Compensation, navigation of the criminal justice system and referrals to the appropriate community helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.



Resources

2-1-1 Texas

2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905

www.211texas.org

VINE

(Victim Information and Notification Everyday)

1-877-894-8463

www.vinelink.com

Office for Victims of Crime

1-800-851-3420

www.ovc.gov

After A Robbery

Victim Services Unit

5555 Airport Blvd
Austin, TX 78751
512-854-9709



Name/ID Number:

Direct Number:

Mailing Address:
PO Box 1748
Austin, TX 78767

The direct or implied violence in robberies may result in unexpected personal reactions and feelings for victims.

Most robbers are not interested in physically harming their victims. They often use threats to frighten, then they complete the robbery and escape. They usually do not remember the faces or the appearance of their victims.

Remember...Robberies are unusual events, so unusual reactions are expected. Your reaction to a robbery may depend on:

- The suddenness or degree of warning
- If your personal safety was threatened
- The behavior of the robber/s
- The number of previous robberies in which you have been involved
- Your stress level prior to the robbery
- Your physical and emotional health
- Amount of support received after a robbery

During the Robbery

Any of your reactions during a robbery will be automatic. You may not be aware of what you are doing. Events may seem to be in slow motion. Several minutes may seem like an hour. You may focus on one or two aspects of what is happening and not notice other events.

You may have feelings of:

- Fear for your safety and the safety of others
- Helplessness
- Confusion about what to do/how to respond
- Concern the robber may remember you
- Physical reactions—shaking, sweating, inability to move, sweating, headaches

Immediate Aftermath

After the robbers have fled, the most immediate reaction is one of relief that the crisis is over—you survived it and you were not severely hurt. Relief may be followed by feelings of:

Anger at:

- Having to go through a robbery
- A system which allows it to happen
- The robbers because they got away
- Having to give up cash or personal possessions
- Law enforcement for not arriving sooner

Helplessness that:

- You could do nothing during the robbery
- You could be robbed at work, at home, on the street—then anything is possible
- That you have been victimized

Guilt that:

- You did not behave differently
- You could have prevented it
- You should have remembered details

Frustration because:

- Your employer gave you some responsibilities after the robbery
- You had to answer a lot of questions
- You could not remember all of the details
- You had to return to work

It's important to remember that these feelings may occur whether the robbery took place in your place of employment, a business that you were visiting or to you personally on the street.

Common Reactions

Although all reactions are individual, some common reactions include:

- Feeling alone or frightened
- Wanting to talk about the robbery a lot
- Not wanting to talk about it at all
- Change in appetite or sleep patterns
- Dreaming about the event
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Feeling of vulnerability
- Hyper vigilance—your guard may be up, you may react to sudden movement or loud noises
- Preoccupation with the robbery—you may relive it or you may try to identify people who you think were involved

What May Help

Although reactions to a traumatic event can be expected, the following tips may help:

- Refrain from excessive substance use
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a proper diet
- Rest regularly
- Continue contact with colleagues, friends, family—people who will listen supportively
- Be honest with yourself regarding your stress level and your ability to cope