In an emergency, call the police and report the crime, even if your friend asks you not to. This may save your friend’s life, or someone else’s.

If possible, encourage your friend to recall specific details of the event. Your friend may be able to provide the police with information that will lead to the criminal’s arrest.

If You Are the Parent of a Teen Crime Victim

How you and other adults respond to a teen who has experienced a crime can make a difference in how the teen copes with and recovers from the event. Remember that witnessing a violent crime can be as traumatic as experiencing it directly.

The National Center for Victims of Crime recommends that you watch your teenager for these common reactions to a traumatic event:

- change in eating or sleeping habits,
- acting out in an aggressive or inappropriate manner,
- attention-seeking behavior,
- increased risk-taking,
- deteriorating school performance or fear of attending school,
- withdrawal from peer relationships,
- physical signs of stress such as headaches or stomachaches,
- nightmares and other sleep problems,
- difficulty concentrating, and
- feelings of anger, hopelessness, anxiety, and depression.

While it is normal for a victim to move through different stages of feelings in order to recover from a painful experience, sometimes victims get stuck in one stage for an unusually long time. If this happens, you may want to seek professional help for your teen.

Take a Stand for Victims’ Rights

- Make sure your Neighborhood Watch group looks out for victims of crime by offering practical help and accompanying victims to court.
- Celebrate National Crime Victim Rights Week in April of each year. Pass out fliers, talk to your school about marking the event, send a letter to local media asking them to feature victims’ rights.
- Find out what laws your state has passed to address victims’ rights. Write to your state senator or representative if you think more needs to be done.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1730 Park Road, NW
Washington DC 20010
800-TRY-NOVA (information and referral)
202-232-6682 (crisis counseling)
www.trynova.org

National Center for Victims of Crime
2000 M Street NW, Suite 480
Washington, DC 20036
202-467-8700
www.ncvc.org

The National Citizens’ Crime Prevention Campaign, sponsored by the Crime Prevention Coalition of America, is substantially funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.
Did you know that teens are twice as likely as any other age group to be victims of violent and property crime? Girls are more likely to be victims of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, while boys are more likely to be victims of assault, robbery, and homicide.

Given the high victimization rate for teens, chances are that you’ve either been a victim of a crime yourself, or you know someone who has been. Experiencing a crime can be traumatic, whether it involves a stolen wallet or a physical assault. All victims need help.

If You Are a Victim of Crime

You might feel
◗ embarrassed or foolish that someone took advantage of you.
◗ guilty because you could not prevent the crime or because your circumstances allowed it to happen.
◗ anger and a desire for revenge.
◗ fear that the perpetrator or someone else may stalk, rob, or attack you again.
◗ shock that something so unexpected has happened to you.
◗ sadness about the loss of property or feelings of safety you had before the crime.
◗ hopelessness that anything can be done about the crime.
◗ reluctance to talk about the crime, or a need to tell your story over and over.
◗ a sense that things will never be the same.

What you might do
◗ Call 911 immediately to report the crime and get any needed emergency medical treatment.
◗ Talk to the police. Talk to your parents or other trusted adult.
◗ Do not blame yourself for the crime. Tell other trusted adults that you did not cause it to happen.
◗ Try to remember details of the perpetrator’s appearance and the events that helped the police solve the crime.
◗ If necessary, call 911 to report the crime and get any needed emergency medical treatment.
◗ Seek help for your physical and emotional injuries from a mental health provider or victim assistance program.
◗ Get any property that you’ve lost back from the police.
◗ What if your friend is a victim of crime?

If a Friend Is a Victim of Crime

Listen sympathetically and reassure your friend that you believe him.
◗ Listen sympathetically and assure your friend that you believe him.
◗ Tell your friend repeatedly that it is not his fault.
◗ Discourage your friend from seeking revenge.
◗ If your friend repeatedly does that, it is not his fault. Because victims often blame themselves, it’s important to talk about their feelings and reassure them.
◗ Don’t blame your friend even if her actions put her in harm’s way.

Your Legal Rights as a Victim

Police and courts realize that victims need help. Most states have passed laws to protect victims. Here are the rights that most victims can expect:
◗ The right to privacy.
◗ The right to receive compensation for damages.
◗ The right to receive compensation for damages.
◗ The right to be treated with dignity and respect.
◗ The right to protection from intimidation and harassment.
◗ The right to be treated with dignity and respect.
◗ The right to participate in the criminal justice system.

If you think your friend needs help but won’t tell anyone, find an adult you trust and tell them what happened. If you know someone who has been a victim of a crime yourself, or you know someone who has been a victim of a crime yourself, you might feel

If You Are a Victim of Crime