

Victim Tools

Help for Victims of Crime

If you have been the victim of a crime, from a stolen wallet to rape and/or sexual assault, you may be experiencing a range of emotions. During the weeks that follow, your feelings and thoughts may change and may be different from what they normally have been. Even though this may be difficult to accept, know that these feelings and emotions are normal for a person who has gone through a crisis. In time, these feelings will fade away.

There are many feelings you may be feeling, such as anger, depression, a feeling of helplessness, feeling unclean or dirty, or alone. You may have trouble eating or sleeping. You might feel like you have little or no energy. It's normal to feel confused or out of control when dealing with these raw emotions. During this stressful period, it is imperative that you take care of yourself.

Types of Crimes and Common Consequent Responses

- Petty Theft/No Bodily Harm
Example: You return to your room and discover that your laptop computer has been taken.
Emotional Response: This theft may have left you feeling scared or vulnerable. You may experience difficulty sleeping for fear that the perpetrator will return while you are home. You may be feeling a sense of anxiety because all your school work was saved to your hard drive and now it is all gone. You may also feel embarrassed for feeling vulnerable or anxious. You may believe that others would think you are weak if you told them how you were feeling as a result of this crime.
- Petty Theft/Physical Presence
Example: You were asleep in your room. When you wake up, you discover that your cash and credit cards were stolen. You immediately realize that the theft took place while you were in the room.
Emotional Response: You may be feeling many of the same emotions as those described above. You may also be feeling a sense of paranoia, wondering what might have happened had you woken up while the perpetrator was still in the room.

- Theft/Bodily Harm
Example: You are walking with your friends along the sidewalk. You fall to the ground as a perpetrator grabs your book bag and runs.
Emotional Response: Along with the other emotions listed in previous examples, you may be terrified to go out in public. You may be suspicious of every person you see.

- Interpersonal Violence
 (Date Rape)
Example: You are out with friends. You invite an acquaintance back to your room. The acquaintance rapes you.
Emotional Response: Because you may have been drinking and flirting, and because you did invite this person into your room, you may feel guilty. You may believe it was your fault (even though it is never your fault) and that you were asking for it. You may start to feel angry, afraid, anxious, and paranoid.

- Interpersonal Violence
 (Rape and/or Sexual Assault)
Example: You are walking back to your vehicle after leaving the grocery store. A stranger grabs you from behind and threatens to kill you if you make a sound. The stranger rapes you.
Emotional Response: You know that you did not “ask for it,” but you cannot shake the feeling that there was something you could have done. You think that somehow, even this violent act was your fault. You may distrust even those closest to you and be terrified to go anywhere by yourself. You may have trouble eating or sleeping. You may be feeling a loss of control. Nightmares may keep you awake and remembrances of the attack may control your every thought during the day.

Male Victims of Rape and/or Sexual Assault

Did you know that men can be victims of sexual assault? Sexual assault can be anything from unwanted sexual touching, unwelcome sexual advances, or forced sex. All of these have an enormous impact on the male victim.

Men suffer many of the same emotional responses as women. They may also feel that they are "less of a man" and no longer have control over their own body. Male survivors may feel a particular sense of disturbance from the notion that they could not protect themselves from an attack and were somehow conquered, even if the attack consisted of numerous rapists.

What should you do to deal with these varying emotions
so that you may feel “normal” again?

Any Belmont University student or employee who has been the victim of or a witness to a crime, either on or off campus, may request services from various resources on campus including Residence Life, Student Affairs, and the Office of Campus Security.

Services include but are not limited to:

- Immediate Transportation (example: you are stranded and a crime has just occurred)
- Transportation to a hospital
- Help contacting family/friends
- Help contacting emergency services.
- Connect you with campus services.
- Will act as liaison between you and work/school
- Education and Training
- Other as needed.

Mandated Reporting

If you choose to talk to someone, you should know that some adults are legally required to report certain crimes, such as neglect or abuse, to someone else, like the police or child protective services. Some examples of mandated reporters are teachers, counselors, law enforcement agencies, doctors, coaches, and activity leaders. If you want help deciding who to talk to, contact any of the on-campus or off-campus resources listed below.

On- Campus Resources

Counseling Services:

615/460-6856

Office of Campus Security:

615/460-6617

Residence Life:

615/460-5802

Student Affairs:

615/460-6407

Student Health Services:

615/460-5506

University Ministries:
615/460-6419

Off-Campus Resources

Nashville Sexual Assault Center:
Crisis Line: 800/879-1999
Nashville Office: 615/259-9055

Metro Police:
Non-Emergency: 615/862-8600
Emergency: 911