

## Judicial System

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

Arizona has laws and regulations in place to protect victims. For cases involving prosecution, a court advocate can provide information, education, and support that will help reduce fears and uncertainties.

Another consideration that is often practiced is that of resolution by plea agreement. By negotiation and agreement, this approach to resolution can prevent the need for testifying in court.

As with any situation, education and information about how the judicial system operates, can assist the victim and their family in the reduction of trauma.

Remember, involvement in a traumatic event can produce upsetting responses such as disturbed sleep, diminished appetite, and difficulty concentrating. These responses will likely subside with time. However, if reactions are especially long lasting or troubling, you may need to turn to a professional for assistance.

## Benefits of Counseling

Some of the benefits of seeking counseling are:

- Reviewing the incident and processing the event can help victims clarify what actually occurred.
- Legal and judicial decisions can be discussed and utilized as part of the promotion of healing and resolution.
- The disruption due to trauma can make daily functioning difficult. Counseling can help develop coping skills and strategies, allowing for the continuance of school, work or relationships.
- Establishment of a support network helps to decrease the negative physical, psychological and emotional effects that often result from the traumatic experience.

Survivors can utilize the experience as an opportunity to build and practice assertiveness, confidence, and protective instinct skills.

## Who can help?

The Mesa Police Department Victim Services Unit can assist with information regarding Victims' Rights, Victim Compensation, case status, navigation of the criminal justice system and referrals to other appropriate helping professionals or organizations according to your specific needs.

## Resources

**Community Information and Referral**  
(602) 263-8856

**IMPACT Crisis Hotline**  
(480) 784-1500

**Arizona Criminal Justice Commission**  
1110 W Washington Ste# 230  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
(602) 364-1146  
[acjc@azcjc.gov](mailto:acjc@azcjc.gov)

**National Criminal Justice Reference Service**  
(NCJRS)  
P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
1-800-851-3420

**Office for Victims of Crime**  
U.S. Department of Justice  
810 Seventh Street NW., Eighth Floor  
Washington, DC 20531  
(202) 307-5983  
[www.ovc.gov](http://www.ovc.gov)

# Victim Services Unit

## Personal Reactions to Robbery



Mesa Police Department  
Victim Services Unit  
130 N Robson  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
(480) 644-4075

**This brochure provides information for you and your family about reactions that may be experienced after an armed robbery .**

Robberies may have very adverse effects on a victim. The direct or implied violence may cause personal reactions and feelings that you are not prepared for, regardless of the degree of violence.

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

**Remember**—Robberies are abnormal events. Unusual reactions are expected. Your reaction to a robber may depend on:

- the suddenness or degree of warning
- the extent to which your personal safety is threatened
- the behavior of the robbers
- the number of previous robberies in which you were involved
- your level of stress prior to the robbery
- your state of physical and emotional health
- the amount of support you receive after the event

## During the Robbery

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

### **Some common reactions:**

- Fear for one's personal safety or the safety of colleagues
- Helplessness about being unable to do anything
- Confusion about what to do or how to respond to the robbers' demands
- Anger at having to surrender money or goods
- Concern that the robber may remember who you are
- Physical reactions such as trembling or inability to move

## 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
- At a system which allows it to happen
- At the robbers because they get away
- At having to give up cash
- At the police for not arriving earlier

### **Helplessness**

- That you could do nothing during the robbery
- That you can be robbed at work, at home, or on the street, then anything can happen to you
- That you have been victimized

### **Guilt**

- That you did not behave properly during the robbery
- That you could have prevented it
- That you should have remembered details of the robbery

### **Frustration**

- Because your employer gave you responsibilities after the robbery (counting the cash)
- Because you had to answer many questions
- Because you could not remember details of the robbery
- Because you had to return to work

## Common Reactions

**Although all reactions are individual, some common reactions include:**

- Feeling alone and frightened, especially if you do not live with anyone
- Wanting to talk about the robbery at great length
- Not wanting to talk about it at all
- Worrying that the robbers may come to your home because you are a witness

- Loss of your appetite
- Loss of interest in exchanging affection with your partner or children
- Not wanting to listen to the problems of others
- Finding others are not interested in the details of the robbery
- Experiencing restlessness and sleeplessness
- Waking up suddenly after falling asleep
- Dreaming about the event

**The effects of a robbery may not disappear immediately. In the days following, you may continue to experience unusual feelings such as:**

- Apprehension and vulnerability—if it happened once, it can happen again
- Being unsafe—your “guard” may be up, you may react to sudden movements or loud noises
- Diminished self worth—you may be uncertain, irritable, forgetful, or unsociable
- Being preoccupied with the robbery—you may relive it through recurring thoughts. You may identify people who you think look like the robber.

## What May Help

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

- Refrain from excessive use of alcohol
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a proper diet
- Rest regularly
- Continue contact with colleagues, supervisors, friends and family—people who will listen and not condemn you
- Be honest with yourself regarding your stress levels and ability to cope