



Coping with a Robbery

After a frightening situation such as a robbery, which can involve an overwhelming danger or a sudden loss of security, you may experience a stress reaction. Even a perceived or imagined threat of violence or danger (like the implication of a weapon or a bomb) can be as emotionally disturbing as a real one. When we experience any event as life threatening, it impacts our basic assumptions about ourselves and the world we live in.

We all handle traumatic events differently. It is not unusual to feel hyper-alert or jumpy, to have difficulty going to sleep, or to feel any number of physical or emotional symptoms. Sometimes this is the worst the first day and then it gets better; sometimes it hits you after a day or two; and sometimes (especially if you have been through other robberies) it may not hit you at all.

The following suggestions are designed to help you manage reactions and feelings that may arise:

- Talk to someone. Your friends, family and co-workers need to know what you're going through. Don't shut them out or underestimate their ability to understand life's traumas. Share what you saw, heard, touched, smelled, etc. It will help you deal with what affected you the most. Involve the important people in your life in ways they can support you. Let your team know how you're doing.
- If your employer offers a group debriefing for the incident, take advantage of this. Even if it's difficult to share what happened with your co-workers, it helps them to understand how to support you and helps the entire team recover. What you share also may help them recover, and the entire team can stay more resilient.
- Use your community support system. Call your Employee Assistance Program, and talk with your minister, physician, counselor, local crisis line, etc.
- Take care of yourself. Find time to exercise and eat well. Avoid drugs and alcohol. Ask for assistance from family and friends, delegating simple daily tasks that may feel overpowering right now. Talk with your supervisor about tasks you find too challenging.

If after a week you are still experiencing tension, poor concentration, the need for longer lunch breaks, tardiness, sleeplessness, nightmares, irritability, crying spells, etc., you may need to allow yourself more help to deal with the event. Keep in mind that your personality and values, social support, and previous life experiences will all affect the resolution of any traumatic event.

Reactions fade over time. However, new events and anniversaries may cause them to resurface or bring up new worries or feelings. If this happens and you find it hard to concentrate on work or maintain relationships with others, please consider seeking professional counseling.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for further help.
Counseling sessions are completely confidential and are at no charge to you.
You can reach EAP by calling **(808) 597-8222**.