

Robbery: tips for coping with trauma

A robbery of any kind can be one of the most frightening experiences a person has at work. When there is a robbery at your workplace, whether you were directly involved or not, it's normal to have some of the following reactions: shock, disbelief, anxiety, helplessness, vulnerability, anger, despair and flashbacks.

You may also experience emotions such as:

- **Fear.** "Do they know me?" "Are they going to find me?" "Are they going to come back?" "What else is going to happen to me?"
- **Anxiety.** Inability to feel safe, especially at work. Easily startled when approached by someone you don't know.
- **Guilt.** "I should've done something different." "I could've prevented it."
- **Anger.** Mad that this happened to you, angry because you had to give them the money and/or they got away.
- **Loneliness.** Feeling that you are the only one having these feelings, and having difficulty recovering.
- **Frustration.** Because now you must return to work and people are asking you questions about the incident you can't distance yourself from it.

Immediately after the robbery

You may find yourself physically, mentally and/or emotionally exhausted, or feeling wired and needing to talk about it. You could have difficulty paying attention to what others are saying or finding interest in others. In addition, it is also common to experience problems with your appetite or sleeping.

Days after the robbery

You may find yourself moody, hyper-vigilant and concerned for your safety, wondering if it will happen again. You could replay the robbery in your mind and "see" the suspect in each unfamiliar person you meet.

After one week

After a traumatic event, it's normal to feel scared, confused or angry for a while. If these feelings don't go away, or if they get worse, you may have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Symptoms include having nightmares or flashbacks about the event, not being able to feel or express emotions toward loved ones and being easily angered or "edge." If you think you have PTSD, it's important to get treatment. Treatment can work, and early treatment may help reduce long-term symptoms.

Coping tips

- Identify and connect with your support systems, i.e., colleagues, family, community, friends, church, etc. and do not isolate yourself.
- Get back to your normal routine, including returning to work.
- Abstain from frequent and excessive substance use.
- Make sure you rest, keep a healthy diet and exercise.
- Remind yourself that you have made it through this traumatic event and now it's time to move on.

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