# Victim Support – Impact of crime on individuals, communities and society – Transcript

***Can you describe the impact of crime on victims?***

**Kate Caskie, Victim Support Scotland**: Victim Support Scotland talks about the ripple effect of crime. If you throw a stone into the water, there’s the initial impact and splash of the stone, but then the ripples go out beyond that and then further ripples and further ripples. That’s what crime’s like.

The individual who has been the victim of crime, it has an impact on them, but then the circles start to go wider, their family start to be impacted. The number of people who… the mothers of crime victims who say: 'If only I hadn’t let him do this', 'If only I hadn’t let her walk home'…whatever. So there starts to be blame and tension there.

Within the wider community, there can be fear, the fear of crime. People say: 'Well, this happened. We’re not sure. Is it safe for us to go out? Can we walk the streets?' and then the whole community becomes affected by that fear of crime.

The ripple effects move on, they move into the costs of health, the employment costs if people lose their jobs, and suddenly there’s a cost to the whole of society of the individual crime. The costs of arresting the perpetrator, the cost…it costs £40,000 a year to keep a perpetrator in jail, which the taxpayer has to pay for.

So, what looks like just a crime that has impacted on one person, when you start to look at the wider effects on the community, you can see how crime really, really ripples out and affects all of us, right down to the taxpayer who may not know that a person has been a victim of crime or even know that a crime has happened but we’re all paying the taxes, the money that it costs the public sector when someone is a victim of crime.

We can help if people need a joiner or whatever. We can recommend somebody. We have an immediate needs fund for immediate financial need as a result of crime that people might get back, for example the cost of emergency dental treatment or so forth, if somebody’s had their teeth damaged in a crime.

But we also help support people emotionally. Now for some people, just talking about what’s happened to them and talking about how they feel can be all they need, that can be enough to get them to restore. We reassure people that their feelings are normal.

That’s very important because people think: 'Oh, I feel this. Is this right? I am not sleeping, I’m having nightmares.' And sometimes all that people need to learn, or need to hear, is that this is normal and this is to be expected.

But where people are more profoundly damaged, we’ll also refer them on to psychologists or counsellors via their GP. So we really try to help people get back to the position they were in before that crime happened to them.

 [End of transcript]