



Victim Case Studies

This information was taken from Victim Support Services at the following web address:

<https://www.victimsupportsco.org.uk/>

Victim of robbery

One of the Victim Service's most experienced male volunteers went to visit a young man who had been a victim of a crime.

Two men had followed the young man off a bus, then held him up at knife-point to steal his expensive jacket which had been a Christmas present from his mother. Thankfully the young man had had the presence of mind to remove his iPod and mobile phone into a trouser pocket when he saw the two thieves approach him and he did not lose them.

It may sound a routine crime, but the effect on this young man was terrible. He was scared to leave the house, convinced that the thieves would target him again.

The Victim Support volunteer had to explain to him repeatedly that the thieves were opportunistic and would not be back. It didn't help that the robbery had taken place so close to the young man's house, as he had become convinced that it was personal, and that they knew where he lived.

The victim's mother was filled with anger, blaming herself for buying the jacket for her son, and blaming him for wearing it on the street.

The Victim Support volunteer kept in touch with the victim for a few weeks, visiting him twice in his home, trying to persuade him that the robbery was not personal, and that he would be safe to go back out. The volunteer even suggested that he walk him round the corner to the shops, just to show him that he was safe.

Because of the volunteer's experience and knowledge of crime, criminals and criminal behaviour, he was eventually able to persuade the victim to leave the house again.

Victim of anti-social behaviour

The Brown family had a lovely house in a pleasant area, friendly neighbours and a garden they were proud of, until the 'yobs' moved in nearby. They brought their friends, their friends' friends, their noise, their drinking and their drug taking.

Mr Brown complained when they damaged the fence in his garden ... and all hell broke loose.

Stones were thrown at windows, flowers destroyed, doors spray-painted, car scratched and so on, and so on.

No one ever saw anybody do these things. The police were unable to help. A patrol car cruised the area for a time, but saw nothing.

Gangs of youths started to terrorise not only Mr Brown, but his neighbours too. When incidents were reported to the police, the youths had scattered before they arrived.



When the youths arrived in the evening, they would shine laser pens through the curtains of Mr Brown's house, threatening to blind him.

The family took to living upstairs in a bedroom, with no lights on, terrified for their lives. They felt that nobody believed them and nobody cared.

We listened and reassured, believed their story, helped them contact relevant agencies and pointed them in the right direction to allow them to sell their council house and move away.

They will never fully recover from their trauma, but with the help of the Community Mental Health Team, local GP and Victim Support they can begin to try and rebuild their lives.

Victim of domestic abuse

R lives in the South of Glasgow and does not speak English very well. She is only 4ft 3in tall and very slightly built. She had been separated from her husband for a number of years and lived with her two children aged five and eight.

Her husband, an ex-boxer, tracked her down to her flat. She opened the door not knowing it was him, and he gained entry. He beat her up, poured bleach over her and burnt her arms with hair straightening irons. The children witnessed this. The police were called but they did not catch him and the case was left open.

Over a year later, in November 2005, her husband again gained access to the flat by pretending to be the postman. Since his previous assault she had fitted a security chain to the door, but he kicked it off. She ran to the phone, but he grabbed her by the hair and began to punch her.

It was early in the morning and the children were still in bed, but they were awakened by their mother's screams. They ran into the hallway where they saw their father slashing their mother with a knife. He slashed her arms, stomach and clothing, and then beat her until she passed out. The eight-year-old boy was begging his father not to kill his mother. Neighbours had heard the screams and the police were called. R's husband was arrested just outside her home.

As a child, R had had a glass eye fitted, and the glass eye was knocked out and her eye socket badly damaged during the beating. She is still receiving treatment for this, and has significant lumps on her head where he punched her and pulled out clumps of her hair.

Unfortunately, R 'fell through the net', and only came to Victim Support's attention when her children's school contacted us because R had been the victim of a robbery. It was only when our volunteer visited R that the full extent of what she had been through became known. Perhaps because of the language barrier, R had actually fallen through several nets of agencies who should have kept her informed of what was happening with her husband.

She was in the process of being moved to a new house, and was desperate to know what had happened at court to her husband. She, along with her eight-year-old, had attended court to give evidence but he pled guilty so her evidence was not required.

She had assumed that he had been sent to jail, and only when Victim Support intervened with the authorities did she learn that he had received a probation order and 180 hours of community service. When Victim Support told her that her husband was NOT in jail, she collapsed and, when she came round, shook uncontrollably for an hour.



Activities

For each of the given case studies summarise the following information:

1. What crime did the victim experience?
2. What did victim support services do to help?
3. Was the help successful?

THINK:

Imagine you have been the victim of a crime.

- How would you feel?
- Who would you turn to for support?
- What help would you need to recover from the crime?

DO:

In groups of four write and produce a role-play of the crime and the support received after the event.