



If You are the
VICTIM OF A CRIME



Safe & Sound
AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA

BEING THE VICTIM OF A CRIME IS VERY SCARY.



If you are someone with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and have difficulty communicating, you may be even more worried about reporting the crime to the police, getting help for yourself, making sure the person who committed the crime against you is caught, and getting back to your normal routine.

You should know that you have rights and that there are people who can help you. Because of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a law that makes services accessible to people with disabilities, and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), a law that helps to create and improve services to victims of crime, more and more services are available to people who have been the victim of crime, including people with autism and other disabilities.

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS

In most states, victims of crime have specific rights that are in a state's constitution and laws. They include:

- **THE RIGHT** to be given information about your rights.
- **THE RIGHT** to know about all court activities that have to do with the crime.
- **THE RIGHT** to be safe from the person accused of the crime.
- **THE RIGHT** to say something about how the crime has affected you when the criminal is sentenced.
- **THE RIGHT** to information about how the person who committed the crime is punished, including how long they will be in jail and when they will get out.
- **THE RIGHT** to make the criminal pay you "restitution." This means you may be able to get money to help pay for things like medical expenses, lost wages, counseling expenses, lost or damaged property, and other expenses that you paid for or have to pay for because you were a victim of crime.



If you need help to understand and assert these rights, you have the right to “accommodations” under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other laws. If you communicate using pictures or a special communication device, if you need to be in a quiet room without fluorescent lights or loud noises, or if you need frequent breaks when talking to the police or lawyers, you can ask for an “accommodation” based on your specific needs.

CRIME VICTIMS' SERVICES

In every state there are programs that provide services for crime victims. If you are unfamiliar with what resources are available to your loved one, you may want to contact your state's Victim Assistance Program. These programs address the crisis needs of victimized individuals and families by working with a network of community based services. They may be able to assist your loved one through the availability of such services as, a 24-hour Hotline, crisis intervention, shelter, individual and group counseling, abuser interventions, legal assistance, medical accompaniment, court accompaniment, and information and referral. Using the victim assistance network, the Victim Assistance Program will also try to assist you in finding victim assistance providers with some knowledge of autism. In many communities, especially those in rural areas, a victim assistance organization may want to partner with a disability organization to provide services to your loved one. Given that your loved one may have particular challenges in processing and

communicating their experience, it is especially important to have someone familiar with the autism spectrum involved.

In addition to assistance services, programs throughout the country also assist with compensation for crime victims by reimbursing them for expenses incurred as a result of a crime. Crimes covered include, violent crimes such as homicide, rape, drunk driving, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse and neglect. Expenses covered include such things as medical costs, mental health counseling, etc. Individuals with ASD may require specialized counseling and support services beyond the scope of those needed by a crime victim without a disability and victim's compensation may be able to assist with the expense.

For assistance finding your state's Victim Assistance and Compensation Programs, call the federal Office for Victims of Crime at 1-800-851-3420 (TTY 1-877-712-9279). The Office for Victims of Crime also has an online resource directory available at www.ovc.gov/help/links.htm.

WORKING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Crime victim assistance organizations have different levels of knowledge about autism and other disabilities. Some know a great deal while others are just beginning to learn about autism. As someone on the autism spectrum, you may want to volunteer your time and knowledge to help your local victim assistance organizations in understanding what autism is and how

to help individuals with autism. The more familiar crime victim professionals are with autism, the better they are able to help crime victims with autism get their lives back to normal as well as prosecute the criminals who commit crimes against people with autism and other disabilities. You may want to work with your local chapter of the Autism Society of America or other autism or disability support groups to help offer training on autism and assist victim assistance organizations in making their services better for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.



Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism.

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If you appreciated the information contained in this publication please consider offering support through a donation that will continue the availability of this information to others in need. Help us continue the work so vital to the autism community by making a tax-deductible donation at www.autism-society.org/supportasa

RESOURCES

Crime Victim Organizations

Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice
1-800-851-3420 ~ www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/

National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC)
1-800-394-2255 ~ www.ncvc.org/

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1-800-879-6682 ~ www.trynova.org/

Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-442-4453 ~ www.childhelp.org/

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-7233 ~ www.ndvh.org/

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
1-800-537-2238 ~ www.nrcdv.org/

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
1-800-656-4673 ~ www.rainn.org/

Autism and Crime

Autism Society of America ~ 1-800-3AUTISM
www.autism-society.org/safeandsound

Find local resources for victims of crime at Autism Source™, ASA's on-line referral database
www.autismsource.org

Disability, Abuse & Personal Rights Project
www.disability-abuse.com

LEAN (Law Enforcement Awareness Network) on Us
www.leanonus.org

Autism Risk and Safety Management
www.autismriskmanagement.com/