Being a victim of a crime can be deeply upsetting. A child may have felt powerless and unsafe during the crime and afterward, which might result in **changes to their behaviour,** such as mood swings, sleep disturbance, and anxiety.

Changes in behaviour may not be immediate and can vary by the child's age or stage in development.

Some children may regress, become withdrawn, "act out" or appear to be handling the situation well at first. **All potential reactions are valid.**

Wolastoqey
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For more details on available resources for children victims of crime, visit our website.

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Supporting Children and Youth

Affected by Crime





BE SUPPORTIVE

It often takes a lot of courage for a child to report a crime. As a parent/guardian or support person, you may be upset or surprised to find out that a child in your care is a victim of a crime. It is important to stay calm, supportive, and non-judgmental.

SHOULD I CONTACT THE POLICE?

Reporting a crime to the police may help ensure the victim's safety, facilitate the prosecution of the offender, and also assist with obtaining protective orders. Older children and youth may want to be involved in this decision. Police may interview the child at home or at the station, sometimes without you present. If safety is a concern, discuss protective options with police and report threats immediately.

What Victim-Support Resources Are Available to Me and My Child?

The Department of Public Safety Victim Services can guide you and your child through the legal process. If your child has suffered personal injuries or losses due to the crime, they may qualify for benefits under the Compensation for Victims of Crime Program (applications must be made by a parent/guardian if under 19). Indigenous families can also access Indigenous Court Workers **(ICW)** and Indigenous Patient Advocates **(IPA)** for culturally informed support and referrals.

Detailed information about the Indigenous Court Worker program can be found here.

What Rights Does My Child Have as a Victim of a Crime?

The *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* is a federal law that grants crime victims the Right to Information, the Right to Participation, the Right to Protection, and the Right to Seek Restitution. These rights vary depending on the details of each case and apply at different points throughout the legal process.

How Should My Child Prepare Before the Trial?

You can work with **Victim Services** and/or an **ICW** to ensure your child has all the information and help they need. Some things you may wish to discuss are courtroom protocol, potential trial delays, and their emotions about testifying.

You should **not** coach your child on how you think they should answer questions, as this could affect the credibility of their testimony.

What Happens After the Trial?

Victim Services will update you on the court's decision and arrange meetings with the Crown if needed. If the offender is found guilty, sentencing follows, and you may submit a Victim Impact Statement. You can also register for updates on the offender's release.

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