

# Getting Help

## If You Have Been Hurt

If you have been hurt—physically, emotionally, sexually, or financially—by another person or group of people, you may be a victim of crime. Talking about what happened may feel risky, but many young victims of crime find that *not* talking about what happened and coping with it alone is much worse.

## You’re Not Alone

- Seven out of 10 young people between the ages of 2 and 17 become crime victims.<sup>1</sup>
- Youth become victims of crime more often than adults.
- Youth are hurt by all types of crime: assault, homicide, bullying, robbery, hate crimes, rape, stalking, and more.
- There is help for youth victims of crime.

## If You Have Been a Victim of Crime, You Might:

- Feel afraid, anxious, angry, or sad.
- Fear being hurt again.
- Think that you have to handle the situation by yourself.
- Feel ashamed or even blame yourself for becoming a victim of a crime.
- Worry about your privacy or have questions about confidentiality.
- Not know where to turn for help.

## If You Talk with Someone, You:

- Can learn that it is not your fault that someone hurt you.
- Can get support to be safe.
- Start the process of feeling better.
- Have a better chance of healing and getting your life back more quickly.
- Don’t have to carry the burden by yourself.
- May find out that other people have been through similar things.
- May feel more hopeful about your life.

## Getting Help

Trusting someone after you've been hurt can be hard to do. Getting help is about taking care of yourself. When you experience a crime, you need and deserve support. Here are some places you can turn:

- **911.** If someone harms you, if you feel threatened or unsafe, or if you witness someone harming another, you may need immediate help from the police. Your safety is the most important concern. You do **not** need permission to call 911.
- **Supportive Adult.** You may want to talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent or family member, a friend's parent, an adult neighbor, or another experienced person you trust.
- **Helpline.** If you have trouble finding help, call a crisis line in your community. They will listen, support you, and direct you to resources.
- **Advocates.** You can contact a specially trained victim advocate to find out about safety planning, your legal rights, and other important issues. Victim advocates also provide support and counseling to help you heal.

## Keep Telling

Sometimes the people you turn to may say things that aren't helpful. They might get upset, blame you, or be angry. If you talk to someone who is not helpful, find someone else you can tell, and keep telling until you get what you need.

## Reporting Abuse

Some adults are required by law to report some types of child abuse to child protection services—agencies that investigate abuse and find ways to protect youth. When you are deciding who to tell, you can ask people if they're required to report abuse. You can ask them to explain what that means and what would happen if you told them you were a victim of a crime. Then you can decide what you want to do.

## If You Want to Read More...

...about crimes against youth and other Teen Tools in this series, visit [www.ncvc.org/youth](http://www.ncvc.org/youth) or see our GetHelp series at [www.ncvc.org/gethelp](http://www.ncvc.org/gethelp).

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1 David Finkelhor, *Childhood Victimization: Violence, Crime, and Abuse in the Lives of Young People*, (New York: Oxford, 2008), 3, 35.

*The National Center for Victims of Crime is dedicated to forging a national commitment to help victims of crime rebuild their lives. The Youth Initiative of the National Center for Victims of Crime builds the nation's capacity to support youth victims while working to advance their rights and ensuring youth leadership on issues that affect youth.*

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