



Home Invasion is a relatively new term and as a result may have different meanings in various contexts (e.g. police, legal, social, media usage). For the purpose of this fact sheet, Home Invasion will be referred to as a crime whereby the offender enters a property without the consent of the resident and whilst the resident or others are home. There may or may not be violence or theft of property involved. The violence may not necessarily be physical (it includes threats, verbal abuse and intimidation).

## Common Reactions

Many people consider their home to be a place where they are safe and think that crime is more likely to happen in a public place. People may hold the belief that 'my home is my castle' or a sanctuary from the world. When you experience a Home Invasion, this sense of security is shattered.

There can be a wide range of reactions to this kind of crime. These are normal reactions to a traumatic event, and may include some of the following:

- Nightmares or sleep disturbances (especially if the invasion occurred at night).
- Flashbacks to the event.
- Anger.
- Physical injuries (if physically assaulted during the invasion).
- Physical complaints related to the experience (see the 'Trauma and Your Body' Fact Sheet).
- Anxiety and stress.
- Change in beliefs (for instance believing that certain kinds of people are untrustworthy from now on).
- Change in lifestyle or routine (such as spending more/less time at home, staying with friends or having friends and family stay with you at your home).
- Desire for increased security.
- Feeling unsafe in the home.
- Thinking about whether the offender will return.

## Coping

It is important to remember that often the intensity of the above reactions lessens over time. There are some practical things that you can do for yourself to help you recover from the experience. These include:

- Increasing your sense of safety – this may involve practical things such as changing locks, upgrading aspects of security around your home or even making some short-term arrangements such as asking friends or family to stay with you for a while.
- Trying to maintain regular routines as much as possible.
- Eating well and getting enough rest.
- Talking with supportive friends or family.
- Exercise.
- Relaxation.
- Professional counselling/support.

*This fact sheet has been developed to provide general information to victims of crime. It is not intended as a replacement for medical, therapeutic or legal advice. If you have particular concerns please contact your general practitioner, counsellor or Victim Support Service.*

## Common Issues for Victims of Home Invasion

- Security. As previously mentioned you may be considering changing locks or upgrading the security around your home.
- Many people may even be considering moving house. This can be a major disruption and requires careful consideration.
- You may have questions about the police investigation or the court process if the offenders are apprehended.
- You may require information about Victims of Crime Compensation.

## Where to get Assistance

- Your local General Practitioner may be a good starting point, especially if you are finding it difficult to sleep, are experiencing any ongoing physical effects of the crime or just for advice.
- Community Health Centres (listed in the White Pages) can provide support, information, counselling and referral. They may also be able to provide information about relaxation classes.
- Victim Support Service provides a professional counselling service, group support and information for victims on a wide range of issues including Victims of Crime Compensation.
- Local community groups (churches, community centres, Neighbourhood Watch).
- Police Victim Contact Officers provide information about the police investigation and referral to appropriate services for victims. They are located at major police stations in each Local Service Area and in the Major Crime Investigation Section.
- Housing SA may be able to assist with priority housing or transfer requests. See relevant local office listed under 'Housing SA' in the White Pages.
- Residential Tenancies (Office of Consumer and Business Affairs) can provide information in relation to rights and responsibilities of private tenants who may need to break a lease arrangement (phone 8204 9544).
- Your local council community handyman may be able to help people on a low income with security advice and free labour to fit security features. Contact your local council for information about this.

## Further Information

If you would like more information, please contact Victim Support Service on (08) 8231 5626 or view our website at [www.victimsa.org](http://www.victimsa.org)