

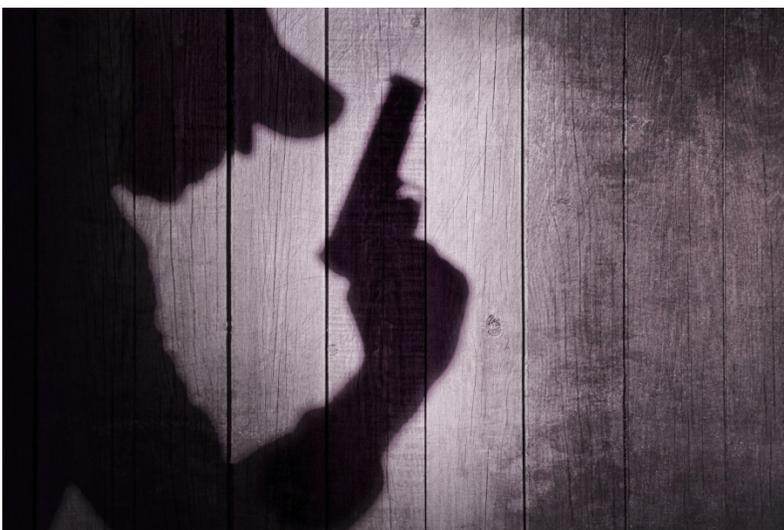
# Unit 5: Robbery

## What Is Robbery?

Robbery is taking or attempting to take anything of value (actual or perceived) from another person by force or threat of force. Because robbery is face-to-face, it is considered a violent crime. Victims of robbery—unlike property crime victims—are directly threatened by their offenders. Robbery may be committed with or without a weapon and with or without physical injury. It is not uncommon for victims to be assaulted, to have obscenities shouted at them, or to be threatened with weapons. Robbers may make victims kneel or lie face down; they may tie victims up or lock them in a room—all adding to their fear and anxiety. Violence can easily escalate during a robbery, resulting in serious injury or even murder.

Most victims experience a common emotion during the robbery—fear. Victims report feeling certain that the offender intended to kill them during or after the robbery. Many victims feel guilty because they did not try to prevent the robbery or because they feel somehow responsible for putting

themselves in the situation that led to the crime. Many robbery victims suffer severe emotional trauma that changes their lives forever. Victims report that after the robbery they experience fear, anger, shock, inability to sleep, nightmares, inability to return to work, lack of concentration, and guilt.



## Words To Know

- Anxiety
- Armed robbery
- Coercion
- Robbery
- Vulnerability

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*Why did it escalate to this?  
Why the gun butt to the head when I  
gave you everything I had in the till?*

**—Robbery victim, in response to  
being physically attacked**

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## In the News: Robbery Trends

According to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report, robberies of individuals make up approximately 75 percent of all robberies. The remaining 25 percent are committed against businesses and banks. Review the facts about robbery below. How do these trends make you feel?

- Most robberies in the United States involve a weapon. The most commonly used weapon is a handgun.
- The most common location for a robbery is on the street or highway.
- The average loss per incident is more than \$1,200.
- Almost all robberies occur in metropolitan areas.
- The collective cost of robbery in the United States is estimated at more than \$500 million per year.
- The average bank robbery nets around \$4,000.

## Examples of Robbery

Robbery involves taking or attempting to take anything of value from a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or making the victim fearful. The following are three examples of robbery. As you read each story, consider the impact of victimization.

Four teenagers confront Gerald, an elderly man, after he goes to his mailbox. One of the teenagers strikes him in the face, knocking his glasses to the ground and breaking them. They take Gerald’s mail, including his Social Security check.

What is the impact on Gerald?

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A group of gang members surround Josh, a 15-year-old high school student, as he leaves the campus. They make comments about his jacket and how they would like to have it. Fearing for his safety, he takes off his jacket and gives it to them.

How would you feel if Josh were your brother?

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*I don’t understand what got them to that point . . . to do this to someone. I cannot fathom that.*

—Robbery victim

A man who appears high on drugs walks into a fast food restaurant and orders the young counter worker, Sarah, age 17, to give him all of the money in the cash drawer. Sarah gives the robber all the money in the cash register and begs him not to shoot anyone. The gunman shoots her in the chest and leaves with \$140.

Who has been affected by this crime and how?

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*They weren't wearing masks so I assumed they weren't going to leave any witnesses.*

—Robbery victim

## What Is the Impact of Robbery

Criminal behaviors such as robbery create a ripple effect throughout several areas in victims' lives: financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual. The following lists outline some examples of how robbery affects financial, physical, emotional, and religious/spiritual areas of victims' lives. Add your own examples below.

<p><b>Financial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to work</li> <li>• Counseling costs</li> <li>• Medical costs</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruises</li> <li>• Cuts and abrasions</li> <li>• Ulcers</li> <li>• Broken bones</li> <li>• Broken teeth</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guilt</li> <li>• Nightmares</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Paranoia</li> <li>• Inability to sleep</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Religious/Spiritual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questioning of one's faith</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>



## Victim Impact: Listen and Learn

After viewing the OVC *Victim Impact: Listen and Learn* DVD clip about robbery, answer the following questions:

What were Jim's reactions?

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What were Jim's parents' emotions?

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How was Jim harmed?

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How does Jim think these offenders should be held accountable for the harm they caused?

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*Which robbery case are you calling me about? I work at a convenience store and I get robbed about 10 times a month!*

**—Robbery victim**

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## Being Accountable for Your Crimes

Robbery is a violent crime that has a serious financial and emotional impact on its victims. Victims of robbery suffer a loss of security and are left feeling fearful and vulnerable.

**No one has the right to commit a violent crime against another person, regardless of the circumstances.** Put yourself or your loved ones in the place of a robbery victim and imagine how you would feel.

### How Can I Be Accountable for My Crimes?

*Taking their stuff was only part of the crime for that couple. They had to pay for counseling to try to get over their fear. I will pay my restitution to start making amends.*

—T.J.

*Thanks to what I did, that lady doesn't trust anybody. Maybe my counselor can help me find the right way to let her know I won't hurt her again.*

—Anna

*I hurt that kid just so I could take something that belonged to him. How can I make it up to him and his family?*

—Jermaine

## Additional Activities

### Activity B – Bonnie

Bonnie, age 32, is walking to her car in a supermarket parking lot as a car slowly drives by. She is carrying her groceries and purse in one arm and her infant daughter, Katie, in the other. She feels a tug on her purse and thinks that her purse strap got snagged on the car’s side view mirror. She turns to see a woman in the car pointing a gun at her as her purse is ripped from her arm.

What may Bonnie specifically experience as a robbery victim?

<p><b>Financial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>Religious/Spiritual</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> </ul>

How would you feel if Bonnie were your mother, sister, aunt, or niece?

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Write down some of the difficulties victims may have when interacting with police, medical personnel, employers, and insurance companies. Then read the following story.

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### Activity D – Miguel

Miguel has been working at his uncle’s convenience store for 2 weeks and is trying hard to please his uncle. His uncle is allowing Miguel to work for him even though Miguel is not a U.S. resident. The store is located in a high-crime area.

Miguel has just helped a customer find his favorite brand of orange juice and is alone in the store. Two men enter the store and walk around for a few minutes. One of the robbers is high on drugs. He points a gun at Miguel’s head and the other robber jumps over the counter. Miguel feels a sharp pain in his chest. The robbers yell at Miguel, “Don’t hit the alarm and don’t try to call the police!”

The man with the gun guards the door while the other robber tries to open the cash register. Miguel inches toward his cell phone on the counter, dials the police, and moves away from the phone. The robbers are unaware the police have been called.

Miguel continues to feel sharp pains in his chest and thinks he is going to have a heart attack. One of the robbers forces Miguel to open the cash register and takes \$500. The robber hits Miguel in the head, knocks him unconscious, and both robbers leave the store.

The police take more than 20 minutes to respond. In the meantime, Miguel has had a mild heart attack but is still alive. The emergency personnel take 30 minutes to respond and have to wait to find out which hospital is willing to treat Miguel, who has no insurance. A television news crew happens to be in the area and they begin broadcasting live from the scene. Miguel’s uncle and the rest of the family are at home watching the news.

