

Mental Health Issues in Identity Theft

Module 2:

Emotional Impact of Identity Theft

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- List at least three reactions to Identity Theft that are fairly common to all victims.
- List at least three reactions that tend to vary among Identity Theft victims, based on different reactions to life in general.

Activity

Goal:

Participants will experience the mental and emotional consequences of Identity Theft by role playing around their tables.

Stress Levels of Identity Theft Victims

(2009 National Crime Victimization Survey)

- 20% of Identity Theft victims reported that the incident was severely distressing.
- 40% of victims who spent more than 6 months resolving problems from their Identity Theft reported that the incident was severely distressing.

Common Reactions of Identity Theft Victims

- **Embarrassment**
- **Fear and Vulnerability**
- **Diminished Trust**
- **Angry**
- **Defensive**
- **Overwhelmed**

Variations in Victim Reactions

Not every person who is victimized
is traumatized.

National Crime Victim Survey Special Report on Identity Theft, 2008

- 29% of **violent crime** victims reported the incident as severely distressing.
- 20% of **Identity Theft** victims reported the incident as severely distressing.

Crime Victims Most Likely to Develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Events

- History of Family Violence
- Interpersonal physical trauma (rape, assault)
- Chronic interpersonal physical traumas

Crime Victims Most Likely to Develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Reactions

- Attach significant negative meaning to event
- Perceive lives threatened
- Pre-existing mental health problems

Hypothesis:

Emotionally vulnerable victims are likely to need more mental health assistance.

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