

## Are Missing Adults Victims of Crime?

As discussed in the Fact Sheet titled, “Reasons Why Adults Go Missing”, adults go missing for a variety of reasons – most of which do not include criminal activity.

It is not a crime in Canada to go missing. Every adult has the right to leave everyone behind and to start a new life elsewhere.

If you believe that your loved one’s disappearance is due to foul play, please tell police so that they are aware of all circumstances that pose a risk to your loved one.

### The right to privacy

One reason why missing person investigations are difficult for police is that they have to balance an individual’s right to privacy with concerns for their safety. The challenge is to determine if the person is missing by choice, or is the victim of crime.

### Why is this important?

When it is unclear whether a missing adult has been the victim of crime, family members who are left behind may have difficulty accessing various forms of community support.

### Services for families of missing adults

When a young child goes missing, society recognizes that family members need help and support to cope. A number of excellent organizations and services exist that help families of missing children.

Unfortunately, dedicated services for those struggling with the absence of an adult loved one are more difficult to find. Often, families are left to search for support services on their own.

### Finding help

A number of organizations do offer knowledge and resources to family members dealing with the disappearance of an adult loved one.

Many police and community-based services that work with victims of crime, make their services available to those who are dealing with traumatic situations. This includes families with missing adults. Often services are available even if an official police report has not been filed.

To locate police or community-based services, you may contact your local police and ask for their Victim Services staff.

The Policy Centre for Victim Issues at the Department of Justice Canada maintains a national, bilingual Victim Services Directory. This directory can be searched online by city, types of services and types of victimization. Visit the [Victim Services Directory](#) to find support services in your local area.

You can also [contact us](#) to discuss your individual service needs.

*This document has been developed by the CCIMA for general information purposes (12/2012).*