Returning to life after being held hostage or detained

Being held hostage or detained – whether for a few days, weeks, months or even years – can be a terrifying and life changing experience. No matter how long you were held for, it can take time to heal and recover. Hostage US is here to help you each step of the way.

What you might experience

It is not unusual for people returning from captivity to experience a range of things – you are having a normal reaction to an abnormal experience. Don’t be afraid by this – seek out the help you need to recover in your own time.

You might have difficulty concentrating
You might have problems sleeping, experience nightmares or have flashbacks
You might have physical injuries that need to be taken care of
You might feel anger about what you experienced
You might have problems readjusting to being back with your family

Everyone reacts differently. There is no pressure to “get over” things – take your time to heal and seek out the help you need.

How you can help yourself to recover

Physical health – ask your physician for a medical check up to take care of any injuries you might have as a result of your captivity. You might feel fine, but it is always a good idea to get a check up.

Counseling and wellbeing – give yourself some time to adjust after you are released, and then consider seeing a counselor to help you process what you experienced. Hostage US can help you find someone near to where you live.

Family and friends – your loved ones might find it difficult to relate to what you have experienced and they might not understand how best to support your recovery. Hostage US can help your family to understand what to expect and how best they can help you.

Returning to work – everyone has a different approach to returning to work. Listen to yourself and take things at the pace that feels right for you. You might struggle to return immediately to full-time work, have difficulty concentrating, or feel uncomfortable with aspects of your working environment. If you feel able to speak with your manager, help them to understand how you are feeling. Hostage US can assist with this discussion.

How Hostage US can help you

Hostage US is an independent and confidential support service for returning hostages and their families. We can help you free of charge to get the support you need.
We can connect you with other former hostages – to answer your questions, share experiences and give you guidance on how to recover.

We can help you to find a qualified counselor near your home.

We can provide practical help, such as legal, financial planning and communications, if you need it.

Our website has a range of information, booklets, videos and resources to help you understand how your experiences might affect you and how to cope and recover.

Get in touch by email info@hostageus.org or phone 888-284-1010.

You will be contacted by a member of our team who will be your dedicated supporter, who will be there every step of the way to help you with whatever you need.

Being held hostage – no matter how long – is a terrifying experience. All hostages need support and help to recover. Hostage US is here to help you.