

CHAPTER 5

HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Key points

- Victims most commonly sought help from family and friends, however, a significant number of victims did not seek help from anybody.
- Substantially fewer victims in Dar es Salaam turned to the police for help than did those in South African cities.
- Victim support should be an important area of intervention for Safer Cities Dar es Salaam.

Who victims turned to for help

Victims of specific crimes were asked in the survey who they turned to for help after the incident. Given the low police reporting rates among victims of violent crime in Dar es Salaam, as well as the limited number of specialised services available to victims in the city, information regarding victims' help-seeking behaviour may be useful for crime prevention practitioners wanting to identify or reach victims through their programmes.

The most significant finding was the high number of respondents who did not seek help from anyone (figures 14-16). For serious crimes such as assault, a fifth of victims did not seek help from anyone. For less serious crimes, such as simple theft, almost half of the victims sought no help. In addition, less than 1% of victims reported seeking help from a professional agency.

Family, friends and neighbours were the most common sources of assistance for victims. Some sought help from official sources such as their local ward counsellor or the police. Substantially fewer victims in Dar es Salaam turned to the police for help than those in South African cities. In Pretoria, for example, one-third of victims of car-hijacking, burglary and murder sought assistance from the police, and around 20% of the victims of other crimes covered in the survey said the same.³

The results indicate that victim support, whether through formal or informal sources, is uncommon in Dar es Salaam. This is a key area of intervention for crime reduction practitioners in the city.

