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Identity Theft Victims Pay Emotional Price

ATLANTA, Feb. 3, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- It's no secret that identity theft can wreak havoc on your finances. But what many people don't realize is that it also can impact victims' emotional health. This lesser-known but equally devastating consequence of ID theft is the focus of a white paper released today by Equifax titled "[A Lasting Impact: The Emotional Toll of Identity Theft](#)."



Last year, more than 13 million people became victims of identity fraud, according to a report by Javelin Strategy and Research. For some, it can take months to regain financial well-being. In a 2013 survey by the Identity Theft Resource Group, identity theft victims reported emotions such as rage, betrayal, a sense of powerlessness, denial and shame.

"Just like with any financial problem, identity theft victims may experience the emotional effects of stress as they fight to regain their financial footing," said Trey Loughran, president of Equifax Personal Solutions. "Victims need to be aware of the emotional toll of identity theft so they can get help if they need it."

According to mental health experts quoted in the white paper, identity theft victims may experience self-blame, feelings of vulnerability and isolation, and relationship problems if the theft occurred by someone the victim knew, which is common.

"While you can never completely avoid becoming the victim of identity theft, you can be proactive about credit monitoring and put safeguards in place in case it happens," Loughran said.

The white paper includes tips for consumers on how to financially and emotionally recover from identity theft. These include:

- Check your credit reports and notify all three credit reporting agencies about any discrepancies or activity you don't recognize.
- Place a fraud alert with any one of the three agencies, which will in turn notify the others.
- File a police report and hold onto it for future reference.
- Pause, but don't panic. Work on staying grounded through times of stress.
- Take care of yourself and pay attention to your health.
- Find a support system, such as your family members, to stick by you as you rebuild your finances.
- Keep a detailed journal of any calls you make, letters you receive or other actions you take to resolve your claim.
- Consider contacting a victim's assistance group to lead you through the process.

- Consider counseling or seeing a professional if you need it.

For a complete copy of the white paper, visit: [A Lasting Impact: The Emotional Toll of Identity Theft](#).

About Equifax

Equifax Personal Solutions empowers consumers with the confidence and control to be their financial best. Find out more about Equifax's innovative suite of credit monitoring and identity protection products at www.equifax.com. Learn about identity theft and how to help protect yourself and your family at IdentityProtection.com. Get smart information on everything from credit to retirement, all in one place at the Equifax Finance Blog, blog.equifax.com.

Equifax is a global leader in consumer, commercial and workforce information solutions that provide businesses of all sizes and consumers with insight and information they can trust. Equifax organizes and assimilates data on more than 600 million consumers and 81 million businesses worldwide. The company's significant investments in differentiated data, its expertise in advanced analytics to explore and develop new multi-source data solutions, and its leading-edge proprietary technology enable it to create and deliver unparalleled customized insights that enrich both the performance of businesses and the lives of consumers.

Headquartered in Atlanta, Equifax operates or has investments in 19 countries and is a member of Standard & Poor's (S&P) 500® Index. Its common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) under the symbol EFX. In 2013, Equifax was named a Bloomberg BusinessWeek Top 50 company, was #3 in Fortune's Most Admired list in its category, and was named to InfoWeek 500 as well as the FinTech 100. For more information, please visit www.equifax.com.

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