

Protecting victims



Unfortunately victims of violence against women and girls are sometimes mistreated and poorly protected by police officials. This can also happen to victims of violent crime, and police officials should be aware that the victim of any crime is one of the most important components of a criminal investigation.

Responsibilities of police towards victims of crime

- Treat victims of crime with dignity and respect.
- All victims should be informed in clear and understandable language of the following :
 - Their role in legal proceedings
 - The scope, timing and progress of such proceedings
 - The disposition of their cases

Responsibilities of police towards victims of crime

- Rights in a language that the victim understands
- Transportation to medical service
- Allow them to air their views and feelings on all matters
- Protection of privacy and safety of victims
Property of the victim is secure

Information that should be provided to victims

- Procedure to be followed in relation to the investigation
- Regular feedback during the investigation process
- Date and the time of the trial of his or her case
- Postponement of any trial
- Date on which the accused will be sentenced

Information that should be provided to victims

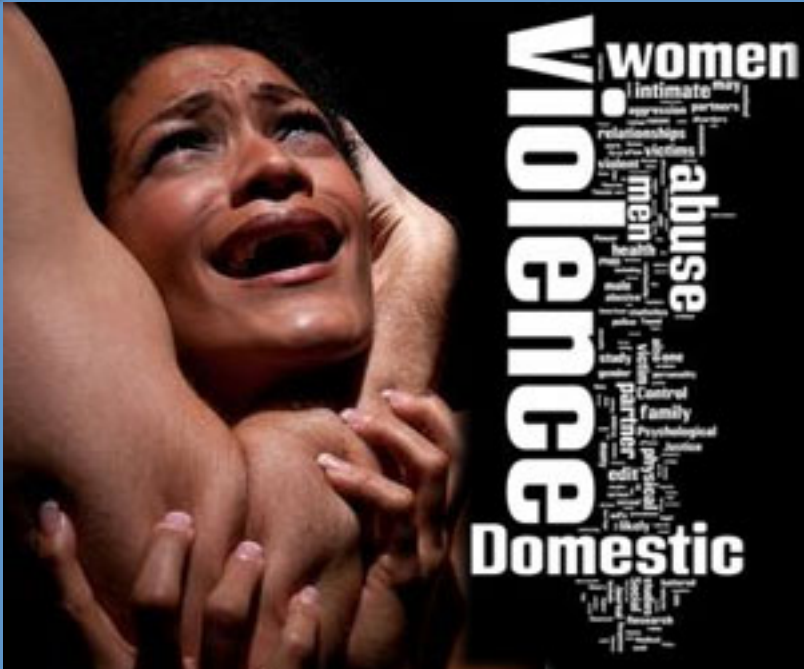
- Outcome of reports received
- Place, time and from whom any exhibits belonging to the victim, may be collected



Victim safety



WITHOUT
INFRINGING



A graphic featuring a red banner with the word "RIGHTS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The banner is tilted diagonally upwards from left to right. The background is a solid blue color. In the top-left corner, there is a black rectangular area containing the white text "ic" and "ed" on two separate lines.

Victim safety

- Respond to all calls
- On arrival at the scene, police officers should identify themselves, explaining the reason for their presence on the premises
- Act cautiously and avoid disclosing the individual who reported the incident
- Enter the residence and check for illegal weapons and other relevant evidence
- Ask to speak to any other persons on the premises to ensure their safety
- In the event of resistance, the police may call for reinforcement
- Interview neighbours discreetly
- Upon enter the dwelling place make a general assessment of the risk to the victim's physical safety (hurt or in a state of shock, depression)
- Interview the victim separately from the assailant

Responsibility to girl victims

There are **special measures** to be taken into consideration when you work with **girls (child victims)** who are victims of crime:

- Right to protection
- Right to special care (Refugee and tortured children)
- Protection of juvenile delinquents from abuse
- Be respectful, attentive, empathetic, calm and patient
- Conduct Interview in a place where child feels comfortable and safe
- Speak in the child's language
- Avoid divulging child's identity to persons not involved
- Ensure that the relevant persons are present at the police interview

The role of external service provider/medical assistance

- The police in every police station should identify community health services, community health care workers and facilities in its vicinity to be used as resources for victims



The role of the community health care worker

- Provide emergency health care services
- Assess immediate safety needs
- Identify physical and emotional injuries
- Examine the victim / client
- Take adequate medical records
- Advise and refer to other support structures
- Present medical evidence in court

Role of the accredited health care practitioner

- Initially provide treatment and collect medico-legal evidence for court
- Inform survivor of rights
- Refer to other resources



Role of counsellors

- The goal of professional counselling is to provide the client with a safe space where she can be:
 - supported
 - feel protected
 - regain her composure
 - talk about her problems in a non-judgemental setting where the listener has no personal stake in her decisions

Safety plan

- Due to the impact of power-based crimes on the victim, it is important for the police officer to carefully determine the victim's needs
- Safety planning is a significant aspect of case handling and management
- Inadequate preparation may result in different forms of re-victimisation and even death of a victim

Types of safety plans

- Change locks on doors and windows
- Install a security system — window bars, locks, better lighting, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers
- Teach the children to call the police or family and friends if they are snatched
- Talk to schools and childcare providers about who has permission to pick up the children
- Find a lawyer knowledgeable about family violence to explore custody, visitation and divorce provisions that protect you and your children
- Obtain a restraining order

Components of an effective safety plan

- Avoid assuming that you know the full extent and impact of the violence
- The interview might not have revealed all information
- The full scale of violence encountered may be revealed after trust has been established
- Complainants may still be suffering