

You will be taken to a Victim Friendly Room (VFR) or an alternate room where your statement will be taken in private to ensure confidentiality and to protect your dignity.

If you later feel that your statement was incomplete or that you may have left out vital information that could help in the investigation, you may give another statement or provide additional information.

You may request a copy of your statement and the Investigating Officer can make arrangements to provide a copy to you. You are also allowed to have any person of your choice present to support you during the initial statement taking or throughout the investigation process.

The Police Officer will provide you with a case number and you must use this case number as a reference whenever you require information about the case. The Police Officer will, in any event, provide you with feedback of the investigation from time to time.

The Police Officer will ensure that you are examined by a health care professional, who will complete a medical report and collect medical evidence. If you came into contact with the blood, semen or vaginal fluid of the alleged offender during the commission of the sexual offence, you may have been exposed to the risk of being infected with HIV.

In such a case, the Police Officer will provide you with a copy of the form SAPS 580(a) "Notice of services available to victim" and in accordance with this form inform you:

- ☛ Of the importance of obtaining medical advice and assistance and the importance of obtaining post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV infection without delay, but within 72 hours after the offence had been committed.
- ☛ The PEP will be administered at state expense at public health establishments and you will receive free medical advice and assistance on the administering of the PEP prior to the administration of it.
- ☛ That you or an interested person may apply for an order at the Magistrates' Court, compelling the alleged offender to undergo an HIV test at state expense.

You must make sure that the police official has your details to contact you at all times, therefore try to make sure you keep the same telephone number throughout the criminal justice system process.

The investigating officer is obliged to inform you if the suspect is arrested, if you need to attend an identification parade, when the bail hearing is going to take place, if the suspect is released on bail, if and when you have to testify in court, the date of the trial and the outcome of the case.

You may also request the contact particulars of the investigating officer so that you can contact him or her about your case. The police will investigate the case and may wish to interview other people close to you as part of the investigation, for example, the first person that you disclosed the rape to is a key witness in the case. The docket will be

handed over to the prosecutor and both the investigating officer and the prosecutor will be able to give you information on the investigation of the case.

THE SERVICE CHARTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

The South African government has developed a set of rights for victims and standards of service delivery for officials that shows what you have a right to expect when you report a crime to the SAPS and what to do if your rights are not upheld. You have the right to be treated with fairness, and respect for your dignity and privacy, to offer information, to receive information, to protection from further harm, to assistance, to compensation and to restitution.

WHAT CAN WE ALL DO?

- ☛ Stop clinging to myths and stereotypes that perpetuate rape and violence, and blames the victim.
- ☛ Rape is a crime and only the offender is to blame.
- ☛ Do not use incorrect tribal and religious practises that degrade and objectify women.
- ☛ Be a positive role model for young men and women.
- ☛ Accept that no one is above the law.
- ☛ Speak out against sexual offences.
- ☛ Join community-based initiatives to educate on gender equality issues and to render victim support.
- ☛ Report sexual offences and assist and encourage others to report sexual offences.

**Do not protect perpetrators of rape and other sexual offences.
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY NO**

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

Contact your local police station

SAPS Emergency Line **10111**

SAPS Crime Stop **08600 10111**

**SAPS Family Violence
Child Protection and Sexual
Offences Unit, Head Office, Pretoria** **(012) 393 2184**

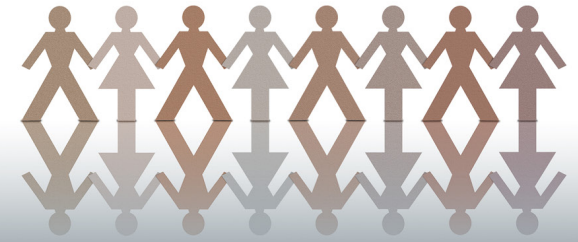
Rape Crisis 24 Hour Helpline **(021) 447 9762**

Women Abuse Helpline **0800 150 150**

Child line **0800 055 555**

AIDS Helpline **0800 012 322**

**Visible Policing: Gender Based
Violence & Victim Empowerment** **(012) 421 8000**



BREAK THE SILENCE

ON SEXUAL OFFENCES!



WHAT IS A SEXUAL OFFENCE?

Sexual offences as defined in the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007 (Act No 32 of 2007) includes sexual assault, compelling or causing persons of 18 years or older to witness sexual offences, sexual acts or self-masturbation, exposure to or displaying child pornography to persons 18 years or older, engaging the sexual services of persons 18 years or older, trafficking in persons for sexual purposes and rape. Rape is defined as any person who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with another person, without the consent of that other person.

WHAT PROTECTION DOES THE ACT PROVIDE?

The Act protects all victims in general, and also specifically protects children and the mentally-disabled against the following offences:

- ☛ Sexual exploitation,
- ☛ sexual grooming,
- ☛ exposure or display of pornography,
- ☛ using children or mentally-disabled persons for pornography or benefiting from it,
- ☛ compelling children to witness sexual offences or sexual acts and exposure or display of genital organs, anus or female breasts (also called flashing).

MYTHS STIGMATISE VICTIMS

Myths regarding rape/sexual offences:

- ☛ Rapists are mentally ill or obvious degenerate. **Truth:** Rapists can be any type of person - you would not be able to tell by looking at them.
- ☛ Men rape for sex. **Truth:** Rape is a weapon used to gain power and control over another person.
- ☛ Women can prevent being raped if they fight back. **Truth:** Offenders use emotional manipulation, weapons or threats to subdue women.
- ☛ Most rapists are unknown to their victims. **Truth:** Most rapists are known to their victims.
- ☛ Women who wear revealing clothing invite rape. **Truth:** Appearance and clothing have nothing to do with rape.
- ☛ Victims cause their own rape by going into an unsafe area. **Truth:** Victims are more likely to be sexually assaulted in their homes or in places familiar to them.
- ☛ Promiscuous persons get raped. **Truth:** There is no type of person

that gets raped and the lifestyle and personality of a victim makes no difference.

- ☛ Women say they have been raped to get revenge on a man. **Truth:** People lie about all kinds of crimes, not just rape.
- ☛ Wives cannot be raped by their husbands. **Truth:** A man can be charged with rape if he forces his wife to have sex with him.
- ☛ Women say no when they mean yes. **Truth:** No always means no.
- ☛ A person who gets drunk invites rape. **Truth:** It is not a crime to consume alcohol, it is a crime to rape.

GENERAL SAFETY HINTS

Vulnerability to rape and other contact crimes such as robbery or assault increases under the following circumstances:

- ☛ being alone in a dark or deserted place or at night,
- ☛ appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs,
- ☛ appearing to be lost or not knowing where you are going,
- ☛ talking to strangers and agreeing to accept rides with them,
- ☛ agreeing to meet strangers on your own after meeting them on social media networks (Facebook, BBM, Mxit, Twitter, WhatsApp etc.),
- ☛ leaving drinks or food unattended in public places exposing oneself to being drugged,
- ☛ are in an unlocked vehicle with open windows,
- ☛ stopping for stranded vehicles or persons or offering a ride to them and not being observant or alert for example at traffic lights or an ATM.

However, many people are forced into vulnerable circumstances because of poverty and other factors, and should not be blamed for making themselves vulnerable.

Vulnerability increases inside your home under the following circumstances:

- ☛ allowing a stranger or someone you do not know well into your home, especially when you are alone,
- ☛ leaving doors and security gates open,
- ☛ divulging personal information on social media networks (Facebook, BBM, Mxit, Twitter, WhatsApp etc.) like your address and whether you will be at home on your own.

However, most rapes are committed in the home of the rapist or the

victim, so being at home is not a guarantee of safety from someone that you know.

IF YOU ARE UNDER ATTACK

- ☛ Try to stay calm,
- ☛ common sense is the best defence,
- ☛ if and when possible scream, yell, run away but remember you cannot always defend yourself and your resistance may cause serious injury to yourself
- ☛ if the attacker is dangerous, cooperate and try to negotiate.
- ☛ submission is not consent.
- ☛ remember what the attacker looks like i.e. race, age, height, build, hair colour, eye colour, face, scars, tattoos, clothes and jewellery, as well as the attackers' accent, voice etc.

AFTER THE RAPE

Victims of rape respond differently. Get help or assistance immediately to help you cope with the trauma and to assist with your recovery.

You may feel -

- ☛ dirty and want to wash repeatedly but do not bath or change your clothes afterwards, as your body and clothes may contain evidence that may help the police in the investigation,
- ☛ scared and afraid to go out but report the crime to the police immediately by going to the police station or phoning 10111,
- ☛ it is your fault, that you deserve what happened and that you want to forget the experience and get on with your life.
- ☛ you might be unable to sleep, to stop crying, to eat and have nightmares.

None of these responses are unusual or unnatural – remember that there are services available to assist you with the trauma, including Victim Empowerment Programmes, psychologists, counsellors, health care professionals, social workers, employers, friends, family or church members.

Request the SAPS member dealing with your case to recommend someone to help you.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN YOU REPORT A SEXUAL OFFENCE TO THE POLICE?

A police officer will take your statement which you may give in your own language, therefore the police will make arrangements for a translator.