

Guidelines for Police

For Adult Survivors

1. Before investigating, recommend and explain the importance of a medical examination to the victim.
2. Explain the importance of physical evidence such as the clothing the victim was wearing during the assault, bedding and other materials present at the crime scene.
3. Recommend that the victim brings an extra pair of clothing to the hospital so that the clothes they were wearing during the assault can be obtained as evidence.
4. Give the address and number of the nearest rape crisis center and explain the importance of its services.
5. Protect the rights of victim, suspect and witness.
6. Gather the facts of the case and the circumstances in which the crime was committed (who, what, where, when and why).
7. Conduct interviews with the victim, people who reported the crime, suspect and witnesses in order to find out more about the assault without traumatising the victim further.
8. From the interview an officer should aim to find out a detailed description of the suspect, location and crime scene. They should make sure that the victim is comfortable when they are being interviewed and should discontinue the interview temporarily if the victim is distressed.
9. All evidence from the crime scene should be collected, documented and preserved.
10. Make victim aware of interviews and the medical examinations required, the investigative procedures and the judicial process.
11. A rigorous check of victim and witnesses previous records should be conducted.
12. A rigorous background check should be conducted on the suspect.
13. In order to decide how long the suspect should be arrested for, the nature of the crime and the danger to the victim should be assessed.

For Child Victims

1. When investigating a sexual assault where a victim is under 18, officers need to be extremely sensitive and work with child protection social workers such as NGOs that focus on child trafficking and abuse when speaking to the child.
2. Before they start investigating the police and Child Welfare Committees need to make sure that the child is protected from any potential harm.

3. The police and social workers should work together to come with a plan on how they will conduct a joint interview with the child victim to find out more details about the assault without further traumatising the child.
4. Officers who are interviewing children should have previous experience in interviews with children and should be educated about child sexual abuse and its effects.
5. During the interview both the police and social workers should stress the support available to the child and his/her family and recommend medical services if needed.
6. Both the police and social workers should make the child feel comfortable in the surroundings in order to prevent him/her from getting threatened or scared.
7. The officers who are involved in the interview should wear casual clothing and not have a weapon on them in order to make sure the child does not feel threatened in any way.
8. The interview should be conducted in a neutral setting which will not intimidate the child.
9. The child should normally be interviewed alone but if they are extremely distressed, a parent or a guardian may be present.
10. The child's responses should be written verbatim and not altered in any form.
11. Even if a child is hesitant in answering all the questions, the investigation of the case should be thorough.
12. Siblings of the victim should also be interviewed to see if they are at risk or can add any further knowledge to the victim's statement.
13. The police should also conduct an interview with parents in order to determine if they were aware that the child was at risk prior to the assault and to determine whether they can maintain keeping the child safe.
14. If a suspect is identified during the investigation the police should separately interview them.
15. The police should inform Child Protection Services if the suspect reveals any information that is important for the child's protection.
16. The police should make sure that the suspect does not have access to the child and remains in custody if accused.
17. Gather the facts of the case and the circumstances in which the crime was committed (who, what, where, when and why) through interviews.
18. In order to decide how long the suspect should be arrested for, the nature of the crime and the danger to the victim should be assessed.