

-COURT PREPARATION TIPS

BEFORE COURT

- ❖ Be very proud of the fact that you were brave enough to come forward to tell the truth of what happened to you.
- ❖ Talk about your feelings with someone that you can trust.
- ❖ You may want to show your thoughts or feelings about going to court by drawing a picture, writing a poem or some other personal way.
- ❖ If someone is making you afraid to go to court by saying or doing something like following you, making threatening phone calls or threatening signals, it is important to tell the police right away.
- ❖ A Victim Services Court Support worker is available to support you at court.
- ❖ Don't forget to tell the police and/or Victim Services Office if you change your address and/or phone number.
- ❖ If you are not familiar with a court room, Victim Services can arrange for you to visit one before or on the court date.
- ❖ Do you have any special needs due to pregnancy, disability, or an illness such as diabetes or asthma that the court should know about?
- ❖ The Crown Prosecutor usually likes to meet with you before going into the court. This is usually the day of court.
- ❖ If you are employed, your employer must give you the time off to attend court.
- ❖ Plan to be in court for the whole day. No one knows exactly when you will begin your testimony or how long it will take.
- ❖ Dress comfortably but appropriate
- ❖ Bring something to do while you are waiting such as a book or a hobby.
- ❖ Bring a snack, lunch and something to drink. Only bottled water is allowed in the court room
- ❖ Consider bringing a support person with you to court.
- ❖ Take time in the days before court to do something you enjoy. Going for a short walk can help to make you feel better.
- ❖ Plan ahead to do something calming and relaxing the night before court.

WITNESS STAND

- ❖ Use the washroom before you have to testify.
- ❖ Tell the truth. Do not lie about anything.
- ❖ Address the Judge as “Your Honour”.
- ❖ It is respectful to bow your head when entering and exiting the court room if the Judge is seated.
- ❖ Tell the Crown Prosecutor if something is bothering you or if you have a question about your testimony.
- ❖ Wait until the whole question is asked before answering.
- ❖ If you do not understand a question, ask to have it explained to you.
- ❖ If you do not know the answer, say you do not know, do not guess. It is OK to say “I don’t know” or “I don’t remember”
- ❖ Answer only the question that is asked.
- ❖ Refrain from using the words “always” and “never”.
- ❖ Speak in a clear, strong voice, even if there is a microphone in front of you.
- ❖ You may ask for some water, tissue or even a washroom break if you feel you need one.
- ❖ Some questions may be hard to answer or even seem really unfair but do your best to tell what happened, even if means talking about things that make you uncomfortable.

AFTER COURT

- ❖ After you have finished testifying, the trial may continue with other witnesses, it is suggested that you not stay in the courtroom in the event that you need to testify again.
- ❖ Do not discuss the evidence with anyone until the case is finished. You may need to testify again.
- ❖ The Judge listens to evidence from both sides and then decides if the Crown Prosecutor has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused is guilty of the offence.
- ❖ The Judge does not always make a decision the same day it may be adjourned to a later date. You do not have to attend, however let the Victim Services Support worker know and they will notify you of the outcome.
- ❖ When the Judge makes a decision, you may want to be present in the courtroom. If you decide to be there, discuss with the Crown Prosecutor.
- ❖ If the accused is found not guilty, that does not mean that the Judge did not believe what you said. There may not have been enough evidence to convict the accused person.
- ❖ If the Judge decides the accused is guilty, the Judge will also decide what the penalty will be.
- ❖ If you have chosen to write a Victim Impact Statement, this will tell the Court how the crime has affected you and may have an impact on the sentencing.
- ❖ If you have incurred expenses, you have the right to be reimbursed
- ❖ Do something relaxing for yourself after the trial is finished.
- ❖ Congratulate yourself for a job well done, regardless of the outcome.