



AN INFORMATION GUIDE FOR VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

**Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Section
London Police Service**



London Police Service
601 Dundas Street
London, Ontario N6B 1X1
Phone: 519-661-5670
www.londonpolice.ca

Table of Contents

WE ARE HERE TO HELP	2
WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?	3
YOUR OPTIONS	5
SEXUAL ASSAULT INVESTIGATIONS.....	9
THE COURT PROCESS.....	13
COPING STRATEGIES.....	19
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	20
HELP & COUNSELLING IN LONDON	21
OTHER RESOURCES	23
MY CONTACTS	24

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

We recognize this is a very difficult time for you. The London Police Service (LPS) is here to provide assistance and resources. It is our duty to conduct a professional and thorough investigation. It is our goal to provide you with information and resources to assist you as you move forward in your recovery.

We recognize that it can be overwhelming to navigate the various organizations and phone numbers. Please know that this is normal. The LPS Crisis Intervention and Victim Support Unit (CIVSU) and Victim Services of Middlesex-London (VSML) are here to help you with these first steps. The CIVSU/VSML staff and volunteers will be able to discuss your needs and help you find the best service match for your personal needs and situation. They are knowledgeable about all the community programs, including support and financial options. They are available to meet with you in person or over the phone at your convenience.

In this resource guide you will find information about assault investigations, the criminal justice process, community resources, financial assistance programs, professional counselling and support services in the City of London.



WHAT IS SEXUAL ASSAULT?

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual touching that occurs in circumstances of a sexual nature and violates the sexual integrity of the victim. It can include many types of touching or activity, from kissing to sexual intercourse. Sexual assault can happen to anyone, of any gender, sexual orientation, race, or income level.

Sexual assault can cause trauma. It can result in unpleasant feelings, thoughts, sensations, and emotions both during and after the sexual assault. Responses to highly stressful situations vary from person to person and not all people will experience the same reactions at the same level of intensity, nor for the same length of time. However, it is important to recognize that whatever the reaction is, it is **normal** to feel overwhelmed by the process. If LPS lays criminal charges both the Crown's office and the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) will work with police to guide you through the process.

Sexual assault can be committed by anyone: a stranger, a friend, a partner, a family member or a person in a position of authority.

What does it mean to consent to sexual activity?

Consent is the voluntary and active agreement, given equally by participants, to engage in a specific sexual activity. Consent implies that a person understands what she/he is agreeing to, and possible positive and negative consequences.

Consent is **NOT GIVEN** when:

- you are unconscious;
- you are incapacitated by the use of alcohol or drugs;
- you fear the consequences of not consenting;
- you feel threatened or intimidated;
- you are coerced (compelled to submit through intimidation, threats, misuse of authority, manipulation, tricking, or bribing with actions and words;)
- you are physically forced to comply;
- you say "no", either verbally or physically (e.g., crying, kicking, turning away, putting clothes back on, etc.;;) and/or
- you have a disability or mental health problem that prevents you from providing consent.

Do I have to say "no" to show that I do not consent?

No. You can show that you do not consent by your words or actions, such as struggling, trying to leave, or making excuses to try and get out of the situation. If it is necessary to use reasonable force to protect yourself from being sexually assaulted — use it. Simply freezing and doing nothing at all to show you are consenting also shows that you are not consenting, and the other person needs to take reasonable steps to ensure that the sexual activity is something that you want to participate in too.

What if I agree to the sexual activity at first, and then I change my mind?

You can say NO to anything at any time.

What about intoxication?

A person must have the capacity to consent to sexual activity. A person who is extremely intoxicated by drugs or alcohol *may* not have the capacity to consent to sexual activity. A court would look at all of the circumstances to determine whether that person had the mental capacity to consent to the sexual activity.

YOUR OPTIONS

What are my options after I have been sexually assaulted?

The following options are available to victims/survivors of sexual assault (for those who have experienced a sexual assault within a current or former intimate heterosexual or LGBTQ+ relationship there is additional information to be aware of--see Page 8):

1 REPORT

You may choose to report the assault to police and provide a statement. The following pages explain the reporting process in more detail. In non-emergency reports, you will be met by or speak with a member of the CIVSU/VSML to review your options to make sure you understand the process going forward. You will be offered medical care including the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit through the Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program at St. Joseph's Hospital. To assist the investigation please consider not washing your clothing or bedding as it could compromise any available forensic evidence such as bodily fluids.

2 KIT

You have the option to have a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK) with your name recorded or not recorded (nominally or anonymously). If you are uncertain if you want police involvement you can choose not to have your name recorded on the kit. Your anonymous kit is held at the hospital for 12 months. A nominal kit is completed for patients wishing police involvement and it will be released to police immediately with your consent.

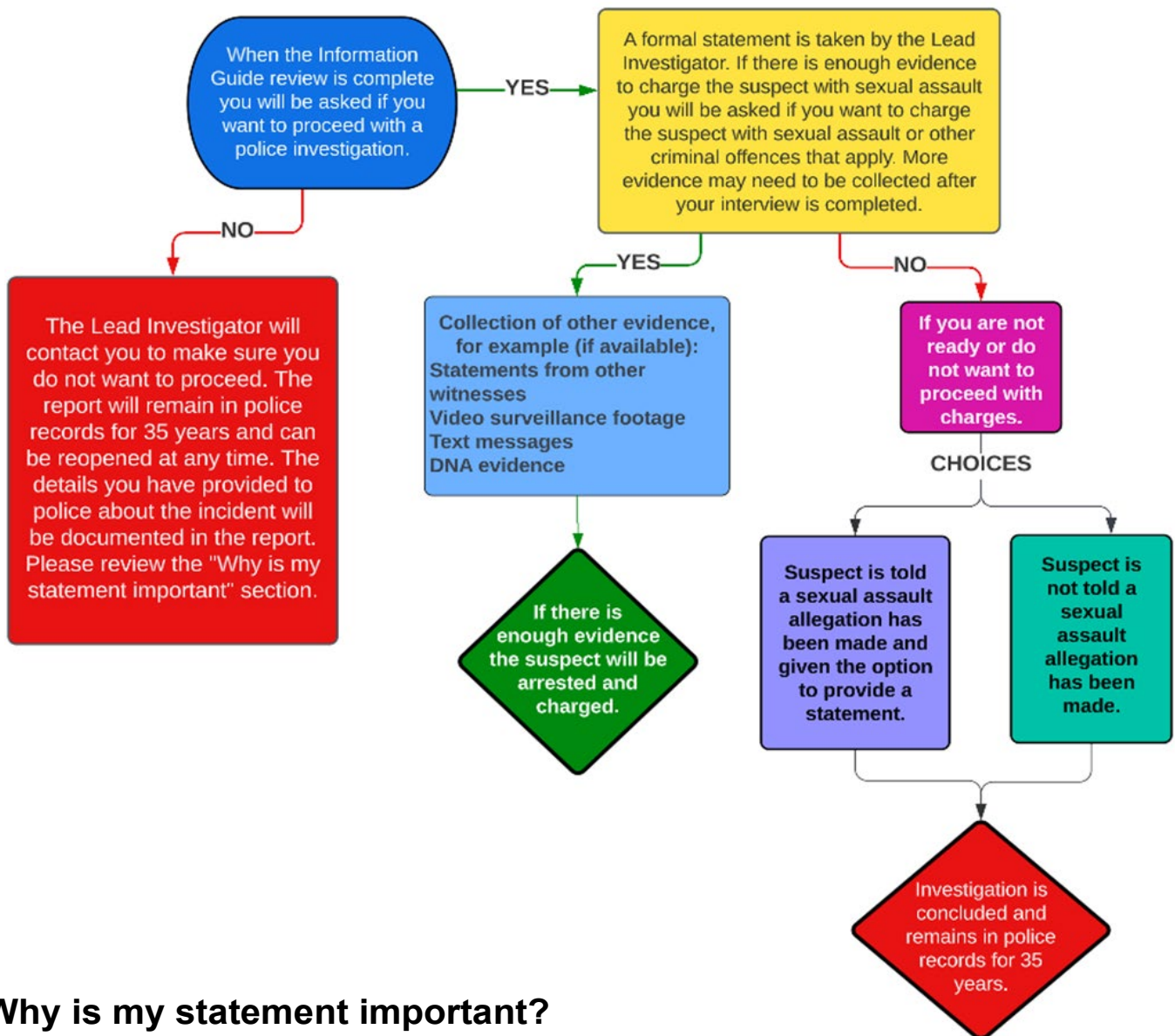
3 LEGAL ADVICE

You can contact 1-855-226-3904 by phone or go online at [Ontario.ca/page/independent-legal-advice-sexual-assault-victims](https://ontario.ca/page/independent-legal-advice-sexual-assault-victims) to access two (2) to four (4) free hours of independent legal advice. This legal advice can inform you of the different options such as reporting to police, suing in civil court, or applying for compensation. It is available to anyone 16 years of age or older and, whether or not you have already reported to Police.

4 NO LEGAL ACTION/ SEEK SUPPORT

You may choose to seek support and refrain from taking any action. It is recommended that you reach out for help at the Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program, through your personal support network, community sexual assault resource staff, LGBTQ2+ and community resources trained professional counsellors, your family doctor and/or peer support groups.

STAGES OF THE POLICE INVESTIGATION AND YOUR CHOICES



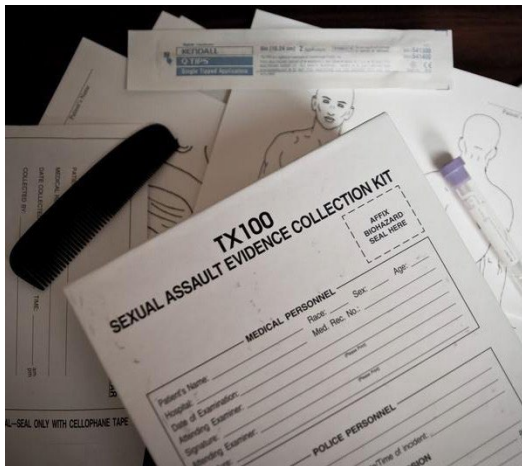
Why is my statement important?

Having a lot of information about what happened to you allows the police to enter the information into two provincial data bases called Powercase and the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis (VICLAS) system.

Police services across Ontario enter information about sexual assaults that happen in their jurisdiction into these data bases. This is to track linkages of crimes committed by the same suspect. For example, if a suspect commits a sexual assault in London and has committed a sexual assault in Toronto in the past both police services will be alerted that the suspect has been named in another sexual assault investigation.

If you provide a statement, it does not mean you have to proceed with criminal charges. You can provide your statement to make sure police have as much information as possible and then pause the investigation. The investigation can be reopened at any time.

What is a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit?



The Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK) is a kit that contains various supplies used to collect evidence from your body, which may be analyzed by the Centre of Forensic Sciences. This evidence can be helpful in the police investigation and potential prosecution of your case. This evidence is collected at hospital by a specially trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE). They will meet at the hospital and bring you to their specialized unit where your care will take place.

You will be informed of all the samples that are required and you are able to guide this process. A sexual assault evidence kit can be completed within 12 days of the assault. However, it is important to know the most amount of evidence and medical care able to be offered is within the first 72 hours after the assault. As time passes physical evidence will likely be lost because of natural bodily processes including the healing process. Therefore, it is highly encouraged to present sooner rather than later. Clothing and related items may still be accepted for forensic analysis after the 12 days.

You may find it beneficial for an emotional support person to accompany you during this time. You can decide to stop at any time.

If I proceed with reporting to the police, what happens next?

Once dispatched to a complaint of a sexual assault, the uniformed officer will:

- Upon arriving at the location of the victim/survivor, assess their physical and emotional condition and/or transfer to hospital;
- Respectfully work with the victim/survivor's identities and social status (sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, faith, culture, ability, etc.);
- Secure the scene to preserve and protect all physical evidence;
- Conduct a brief interview with the victim/survivor in a private environment, to ascertain basic details about the incident;
- Advise the victim/survivor of the option of having the CIVSU/VSML respond to the scene to assist in providing support and crisis intervention;
- If the suspect is present and grounds exist to arrest, the officer will arrest the suspect

and transport them to the police station;

- You can request a police officer of the gender you feel most comfortable with and LPS will do our best to accommodate that request.

Can I report a sexual assault years after it occurred?

In Canada, there is no statute of limitation for sexual offences, which means you can report to police no matter how long ago it happened, and someone can be charged with sexual assault. The passage of time does, however, impact on the police ability to gather evidence.

What if I work in the sex trade?

Anyone can be sexually assaulted at anytime, anywhere, by anyone. This means a sex trade worker can be sexually assaulted by a client. Any sexual contact that was not consensually agreed to is a sexual assault. Working as a sex trade worker is not an offence, so you will not be arrested for that if you report a sexual assault to police.

What if the sexual assault involves my former or current heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirited, transgender intimate partner?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is any use of physical or sexual force, actual or threatened, in an intimate relationship (current or former). It also may include harassing behaviour. Anyone can be victims/survivors of intimate partner violence.

Intimate relationships include those between the opposite sex, same-sex and transgender partners. These relationships vary in duration and legal formality, and can include current and former dating, common-law, polyamorous and married couples.

There is a provincial mandate that directs all police officers in Ontario to proceed with charges specifically related to intimate partner violence. If, during an intimate partner violence investigation, it is determined that a sexual assault has been committed and reasonable grounds are established to lay charges, the police **shall** proceed with charges regardless of the victim/survivor's wishes.

Officers will explain to the victim/survivor and the accused that it is the duty of the police to lay a charge. Only a Crown Attorney can withdraw a charge, but only after careful review of the investigation, including victim input.

SEXUAL ASSAULT INVESTIGATIONS

Who will investigate my case?

Sexual assault cases are investigated by police officers who are specifically trained in the area of sexual assault investigations. The training that sexual assault investigators receive is focused on conducting a consistent and thorough investigation into sexual assault cases, while respecting the needs of the victims and witnesses. The training is designed to enhance investigations of sexual assault by promoting best practices, in addition to victim sensitivity.

A Sexual Assault Investigator/Detective will be assigned to the investigation and will:

- Investigate the incident fully;
- Ensure the victim/survivor has access to medical care;
- Encourage the collection of all evidence including a SAEK, as necessary;
- Assess and discuss with the victim/survivor where and when an in-depth interview will take place;
- Consult with CIVSU/VSML;
- Advise the victim/survivor that they may have the assistance of a support person of their choice during this process (this could include a person from CIVSU/VSML or a community sexual assault service)
- Will sometimes ask questions that you may feel are repetitive, personal in nature or judgmental such as “What were you wearing at the time?” or, “How much alcohol had you consumed?” It’s important to remember the investigators are not passing judgment but rather seeking clarification to ensure they gather all of the facts and will not have to re-interview you at a later date;
- Work with victims/survivors in a manner that acknowledges identities such as LGBTQ2+ etc.;
- Lay charges when appropriate as per the Criminal Code;
- Keep the victim/survivor informed of the progress of the investigation in a timely manner.

The investigator will take your statement in a room that is audio and video recorded. This is to ensure your statement is captured in the best manner possible. Interviews usually take place at London Police Service headquarters, but the investigator can offer other options if you are not comfortable attending the police station. A statement can be one to three hours in length.

If required for the investigation, police may need to interview others who were aware of the incident or in the vicinity, and/or review cell phone and social media records (sometimes even seizing the cell phone.)

The majority of evidence (e.g. video interview or medical records) is often disclosable to the defence. This means that the accused will have the ability to see your statement, records and evidence collected. The Crown will review all evidence.

If you wish to proceed and make a statement to the police, but do not wish to participate in the court process there may be two options:

1. The police may have the option to inform the suspect of the sexual assault allegation and not lay charges. London Police Service do not “warn” a suspect for sexual assault. This ensures the suspect can be charged in the future should you change your mind. The interaction with the suspect is noted in a local police occurrence. If the sexual assault involves a current or former intimate partner, the police are mandated to lay charges.
2. You may also ask the police to keep your case open pending your approval to move forward at a later date. Delays in investigations often compromise the ability to gather evidence.

What happens after charges are laid?

Once a person has been charged with a crime, they become the ‘accused.’ If they are arrested and depending on the circumstances, the police can hold the accused in custody for a bail hearing or release them with conditions. The accused can be released before appearing in court. This is because the police have an obligation to release the accused in a timely fashion unless certain criteria exist to keep the accused in custody, pursuant to the “principle of restraint” for pre-trial release.

At this stage the Crown Attorney’s office becomes involved and, in most cases, a Crown is assigned.

The police investigator will refer the victim/survivor to the Ministry of the Attorney General's Victim/Witness Assistance Program who will be contacting them to assist them with an array of services related to the criminal justice process (see court process section for details).

The victim/survivor can have input into the bail process including possible conditions of release at a bail hearing. This can be provided to the Crown by contacting the investigating officer or the Victim/Witness Assistance Program.

If the police have not released the accused, the accused must go before a Justice of the

Peace (JP) or a Judge within 24 hours after their arrest. If they choose to have a bail hearing it is often heard within a short period of time (1-3 days) from the date of their first appearance.

If an accused is granted bail, this means they are released but may be subject to certain conditions while on release, may have to be supervised by a surety, and/or may have had to pledge or pay money (either alone or with a surety) to gain their release.

The victim/survivor will only have to attend court if there is a preliminary hearing and/ or a trial, if subpoenaed. Although, the identity of the victim/survivor is always protected through a publication ban, police may issue a media release in relation to the investigation in certain circumstances.

If you receive independent legal advice and do NOT want your identity protected through a publication ban you can let the police officer who is interviewing you know this, and this information will be passed to the Crown. A publication ban may still be put in place, but this ban can be later removed in court if this is something you would like.

What if the accused is not located?

If the accused cannot be located an arrest warrant will be applied for. Police will make efforts to locate the accused and will notify you when the accused is arrested.

Do police always lay charges?

Sometimes the police will decide not to lay a charge. This does not mean that the police do not believe you or that the sexual assault did not happen. It may mean that there is not enough evidence to prove a criminal charge in court. If this does occur, the investigators can explain why this has happened in your case. The investigators can tell you of other assistance available to you, some of which are listed in this guide.

Will everyone know what happened to me?

If charges are laid, the Crown will seek a publication ban to protect your identity. See Page 18 for more information about publication bans.

Your privacy is very important to us. When a sexual assault is reported to the police, a review of all the information is done to determine if a news release is required. Generally a news release is issued if:

- there is a risk to public safety;
- information from the public may help solve the case;

- it is believed that more victims might come forward.

General information about the sexual assault, including the date, time, and location of the assault will be included in the news release. The news release will also include a description of the person alleged to be responsible, if that person is not yet known, or it will include the name and age if the person has been identified.

Your name will never be released to the media by police.

THE COURT PROCESS



If criminal charges have been laid but you feel overwhelmed or that you do not wish to continue, the V/WAP and Crown Attorney will work with you to address your concerns and provide support. While decisions about the prosecution, and whether to discontinue it, are ultimately those of the Crown Attorney, your input is critical and your well-being a foremost consideration.

Disclosure

The Crown is required to disclose evidence gathered during the police investigation to the defense lawyer. Anything you say to the police or other justice officials may be disclosed. You have the right to your own lawyer if any party seeks to gain access to records about you, which are kept by your service provider(s).

How long does the court process take?

In 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada released a decision impacting unreasonable delays in court. This is important as it provides the Crown Attorney a clear mandate to ensure a fair but expedited court process. The length of time a case is before the courts has significantly been reduced by the Crown Attorney's office, which is also able to provide guidance and support through the legal process.

The length of the court process varies widely, depending on a number of factors. If the accused pleads guilty, the court process will finish more quickly than if there is a trial. Generally speaking, court matters that go directly to a trial will be completed within 18 months. Court matters that proceed to a preliminary hearing and a trial will generally be completed within 30 months.

This extended period may be difficult for you. It is important to get support during this time.

There are many services available in your community. Please refer to the Resources page.

Once Charges are Laid

Once charges are laid, your case will be referred to a worker in the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP) located at:

London Court House
80 Dundas Street
London, Ontario N6A 2P3 519-660-3041

The Victim/Witness Assistance Program (V/WAP)

V/WAP is a criminal court-based program which is part of the Ministry of the Attorney General's Victims and Vulnerable Persons Division. V/WAP provides information, assistance, and support to victims and witnesses of crime throughout the criminal court process to improve their understanding of, and participation in, the criminal court process. Services are offered at the time charges are laid and continue until the matter is completed in the courts. Services are voluntary.

Services Offered by V/WAP include:

- Information about the criminal justice process
- Case specific information, including court updates and relevant court documents
- Emotional support, including crisis intervention, advocacy & debriefing
- Needs assessment and appropriate referrals to community services
- Discussions of safety issues and referrals for comprehensive safety planning
- Communication with Crown Attorneys and Police about the victim's needs/input
- Canvassing the need for testimonial aids
- Court preparation and orientation
- Safe waiting area prior to testifying
- Information about Victim Impact Statements and Statements on Restitution.
- Information about support services available to victims of crime (e.g., Victim Support Line, Parole Board of Canada)
- Court accompaniment for vulnerable clients where no other suitable support person or service is available



V/WAP will refer matters involving victims under the age of 18 to the Child Witness Program.

Child Witness Project (CWP)

What is the Child Witness Project?

The Child Witness Project is designed to assist and support young victims and witnesses of crime. The CWP provides assistance during the stressful period after criminal victimization and its disclosure but before resolution of the case in Court. The Child Witness Project provides Court preparation to assist child and adolescent witnesses to communicate their evidence without being traumatized by the challenging process of testifying. CWP is funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, there is no cost to the client for this service.

Young victims and witnesses who are involved in Court preparation through the CWP will receive education and information about the justice process, knowledge about how to effectively manage both chief and cross examination, Court tours, information about special testimonial aids, as well as support on the day of their testimony. The CWP clinician will also assess the special and individual needs of all children and adolescents who are involved in the project and will advocate to ensure those needs are met. Court preparation can also include assistance with stress reduction, coping strategies, emotional support and referrals.

What services are offered?

The Child Witness Project recognizes that every child and circumstance is different. As such, the services offered by the CWP will vary from client to client. Depending on the individual circumstances, services will involve any or all of the below components:

- Individual Assessment - Staff at the CWP begin the process with a thorough intake to assess a client's individual situation, special needs, and personal concerns related to testifying.
- Court Preparation and accompaniment- Education around court procedure and etiquette, the role of a witness, oath taking, examination in chief and cross examination, legal terminology, available testimonial aids, the role of Court personnel (Crown, Judge, Defense etc.). The CWP clinician will attend on the day of the Court proceedings to provide support to the victim or witness while they are giving their testimony.
- Coordination with Other Services – CWP works closely with the Crown Attorney assigned to each case as well as the investigating officers, to ensure that they are well aware of each child's needs, emotional well-being and feelings about Court. The CWP clinician keeps victims and witnesses informed of Court dates and adjournments.
- Support for Parents/Guardians – CWP can address any questions or concerns, and ensure that parents and caregivers are well informed about the process to be in the best position possible to support their children.

What happens between the time charges are laid and trial?

Once charges are laid, the accused attends court for “set date” appearances. During this time, the accused will receive disclosure of the contents of the police investigation, they may obtain a lawyer or the assistance of legal aid duty counsel, and they will usually decide whether to plead guilty or set a date for trial, or preliminary hearing and trial. It may take several court appearances over the course of many months for the accused to complete these steps.

The Crown Attorney's Office

A Crown Attorney will be assigned as soon as possible to review the police investigation. Once a preliminary hearing or trial date is set, it is their responsibility to meet with you and prepare you for the process. The preparation is usually done with V/WAP representatives.

If there is a finding of guilt or a firm indication of a guilty plea, then prior to sentencing the Crown Attorney, V/WAP or investigating officer will advise you that a Victim Impact Statement may be prepared for consideration at the time of sentencing.

If the accused chooses to plead not guilty, you will most likely be required to testify at the preliminary hearing (if there is one) and at the trial. If the charge is one of sexual assault alone, you are over the age of 16 and there is no exploitation charge included, then there will not be a preliminary hearing. V/WAP will be available to provide assistance, in addition to community services listed in the resources.

The assigned Crown Attorney is responsible for the case and will make many of the decisions about the conduct of the prosecution. Your input is valuable to the assigned Crown. The Crown Attorney is employed by the government and, unlike the accused who does have their own lawyer, is not your personal lawyer. As a result, what you say to the Crown is not privileged or confidential and is disclosable to the defence.

What is a publication ban?

At the first court appearance, the Crown, in most cases, will often apply for an Order banning the publication of any evidence that may tend to identify the victim/survivor, which includes not publishing your name.

Under section 486 of the Criminal Code, a Judge may prohibit the publication of identifying information about a complainant or witness in certain proceedings related to sexual offences (among other things.)

If you do not want a publication ban, then advise the police and V/WAP as soon as possible and they will communicate your wishes to the Crown.

Preliminary Hearing/Trial

A preliminary hearing is a hearing in front of a Judge. It is not required in every case. In a preliminary hearing, the Judge will decide if the Crown Attorney has enough evidence to proceed to trial. You may have to testify at a preliminary hearing. This will be discussed with you by the Crown at your first meeting. Other witnesses may have to testify as well.

If the accused does not plead guilty, and wishes to have a trial, the matter will either proceed to a preliminary hearing and then a trial, or directly to a trial. If you have any questions about this speak to your V/WAP Worker and/or Crown.

The general rule is that witnesses are required to testify in open court. However, if you do not feel that you would be able to provide a full and candid account of what happened in open court, speak to your V/WAP worker who will relay your input to the Crown Attorney. The Crown Attorney may be able to bring an application requesting the use of testimonial aids. The Judge will decide if the application is granted.

Finding of Guilt

The accused may choose to enter a plea of guilty to the charge or charges. In other words, they may choose to acknowledge in court that they committed the offence or part of it.

If the accused pleads guilty, or there is a firm indication of a guilty plea prior to sentencing, V/WAP or an investigating officer will advise you so that a Victim Impact Statement may be prepared for consideration at the time of sentencing.

If the court finds the accused guilty, the Crown Attorney will invite you to complete a Victim Impact Statement. This statement is your opportunity to share how the sexual assault has affected your life. This statement is taken into consideration by the Judge for sentencing. Completion of a Victim Impact Statement is optional. If you have questions about the Victim Impact Statement and when it should be submitted or need assistance preparing the statement speak to your assigned V/WAP worker.

What kind of sentencing can a Judge order?

Absolute or Conditional Discharge:

A discharge is a finding of guilt but no formal registration of a conviction. It permits people found guilty to indicate they don't have a criminal record. If the sentence is an absolute discharge – there is no other sanction and the “sentence” is at an end. If the Court imposes a conditional discharge – the offender is subject to a period of probation.

Suspended Sentence:

A conviction is formally registered. The offender will be subject to a period of probation.

Fine:

Can be imposed as a standalone sanction or in conjunction with a period of probation

Custody:

The Canadian criminal justice system has several types of custodial sentences.

An intermittent sentence refers to a jail sentence that allows an offender to still work for periods of time – while entering a custodial facility for prescribed short periods. Typically, offenders serve their custodial sentences on weekends and work from home during the week. A probation order will run during this timeframe, so the offender is always subject to a Court order – whether or not in custody.

A reformatory sentence is served in a provincial jail within Ontario. The maximum sentence is 2 years less a day. Often there will also be a probation order in effect once someone is finished the custodial sentence

The Court can order, in some circumstances, that the offender serve their time in the community rather than attend a custodial facility. During this time the offender will be subject to various restrictions on their liberty. This is called a conditional sentence and cannot exceed 2 years less a day.

A penitentiary sentence is when an offender is ordered to serve 2 years or more in jail. There cannot be any probation order once a custodial sentence exceeds 2 years.

Probation:

Offenders will be supervised by, and in most cases must visit a probation officer. An offender usually has rules to follow that are listed on the Probation Order. These rules, known as conditions, may include: not using alcohol; staying away from certain areas or people; attend counselling; seeking or maintaining employment; obeying a curfew. A Probation Order cannot last more than three years.

If the offender violates any of the conditions of probation, he/she may be arrested and charged with a new offence "Breach of Probation."

For more information about Victim Impact Statements, visit canada.ca/victims.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

A victim impact statement is a statement from a victim of crime that describes the physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss they have suffered as the victim of an offence.

A victim of crime has the right to present a victim impact statement and to have the Court or Review Board take it into account.

A victim can choose to present their victim impact statement by:

- reading it aloud
- reading it with a support person close by
- reading it behind a screen or outside the courtroom by closed-circuit television

A victim can also ask the Court to allow them to present their statement in another way such as having the prosecutor, the Court, or a victim service worker read it.

A victim may also include a drawing, poem or letter as part of their victim impact statement to express how the offence has affected the victim.

For more information about victim impact statements, read the fact sheet at canada.ca/victims

Canada

COPING STRATEGIES



A traumatic incident falls outside of normal everyday life and you may need some new strategies to cope. For some people, the traumatic event can get stuck in the brain and body, and you may need assistance from a trained professional counsellor to move through this experience. Do not be afraid to ask for support through your family members, friends, LGBTQ2+ community, other networks, doctors, clergy and/or counsellor.

Helpful things to do may include:

- Talk to someone you trust — it is important to reach out at this time;
- Give yourself permission to reach out for professional help through community sexual assault resource staff, trained professional counsellors, the Employment Assistance Program (EAP), your family doctor and/or peer support groups, LGBTQ+ community, and other networks;
- Spend time with supportive family, friends and/or peers;
- Try to avoid overuse of alcohol, drugs and/or caffeine;
- Acknowledge your response to the situation and give yourself permission to have difficult moments (peer support groups may be beneficial;)
- Try to avoid self-blame, guilt and defeating thoughts — replace them with positive affirmations instead;
- Resist making life changing decisions following a serious incident;
- It takes time to heal so be gentle and patient with yourself;
- Try to maintain your regular routine to help prevent feelings of isolation;
- Try to eat healthy foods and exercise;
- Be aware that traumatic events can sometimes bring back memories of other sad or traumatic events that have happened in your life, **and this is normal**;
- Practice deep breathing exercises, meditate or try other activities that may enhance your emotional well-being;
- Don't try to fight dreams or flashbacks. They are normal and usually become less intense and painful over time. If they do not appear to be decreasing over time, you may need to seek assistance as there are many useful strategies to work through these.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

As a victim/survivor of a sexual assault there are financial options available:

Victim Quick Response Program+ (VQRP+)
London Police Service – Crisis Intervention and Victim Support Unit/
Victim Services of Middlesex-London
519-661-5636

Made available by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and delivered through the victim service providers located at the London Police Service, this program provides short-term financial assistance to victims in the aftermath of specific crimes such as sexual assault.

Eligible expense categories that can be accessed through the VQRP+ include:

- Safety expenses;
- Practical expenses;
- Counselling services, traditional Indigenous health services and associated transportation expenses; and
- Supports for victims with serious injuries.

There are specific eligibility guidelines for this program. To find out whether this program is right for you, contact CIVSU/VSML at 519-661-5636.

HELP & COUNSELLING IN LONDON

INFORMATION ABOUT RESOURCES FROM OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

St Joseph's Regional Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Treatment Program

268 Grosvenor Street- Unit B0644

519-646-6100 ext. 64224

If you or someone you know has experienced a recent sexual assault or domestic violence situation, you can access St. Joseph's Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program 24/7 through many entry points: Call us at (519) 646-6100 x 64224, walk-in, have a friend or someone you trust call, ask any health care provider in an Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre in London-Middlesex, Elgin, Oxford or Perth Counties to speak to us, and/or ask the police officer in charge of your case. We are available on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays.

If accessing a hospital in London-Middlesex due to a recent sexual assault or domestic violence situation, you will be medically cleared by an Emergency Room Physician and we will meet you there or you will be provided with transportation to our program free of charge.

St. Joseph's Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program has a team of specially trained nurses and social workers who are experienced in providing care to those who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault.

Through our program you will be offered options of care such as: Emergency Medical and Nursing Care, pregnancy testing and providing "the morning after pill", testing and treatment of STI's (sexually transmitted infections) and giving antibiotics to prevent STI's, giving HIV prevention medication, giving hepatitis B vaccinations, crisis intervention, safety planning, collection of Forensic Evidence (Sexual Assault Evidence Kit), forensic documentation and photography of injuries, providing information about navigating the legal system and reporting options, counselling/referral to community resources and follow up care.

At St. Joseph's Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program, the individual guides their own care, they can accept all or parts of service provided. We are committed to providing services with dignity and respect to all individuals, while striving to support, welcome, and advocate for survivors of all genders, sexualities, races, abilities, religions, and cultural backgrounds.

Victim Services of Middlesex-London (VSML): a non-profit charitable organization. VSML and the London Police Service Crisis Intervention/Victim Support Unit (CIVSU) work in partnership to provide victims of crime and/or traumatic circumstances with immediate support and referrals to available programs and services. To inquire about services contact 519-661-5636.

London Abused Women's Centre: provides women and girls over the age of 12 who have been abused by an intimate partner, sexually assaulted, sexually harassed, prostituted, sexually exploited and/or sex trafficked with immediate access to long-term woman-centred, trauma-informed counselling, support and advocacy. Women/girls may contact LAWC at 519-432-2204 to set up an appointment to see an Advocate/ Counsellor. Skype and telephone appointments are available for those who reside outside of London/Middlesex.

Anova: If you have experienced sexual violence, including sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse or sexual harassment, at any time in your life, you are not alone. Anova is there to help.

To inquire about support services and arrange an intake, call 519-642-3003 ext. 5555, Monday to Friday, from 9 am to 5 pm or call the helpline, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 519-642-3000.

Carrefour des Femmes du Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario: A regional Francophone women's centre offering services to sexual assault survivors and all French-speaking women 16 years of age and older.

During office hours, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm, call 519-858-0954 or for assistance 24-hours a day, seven-days a week call 1-877-336-2433.

Atlohsa Family Healing Services: Provides community members with Indigenous-led programming and services that offer holistic healing, education, shelter, and support. If you have experienced any form abuse, sexual violence, or human trafficking we are here to help. Our 24-hour crisis line can be reached at 1-800-605-7477.

If you would like to be connected directly with supports for human trafficking you can call 519-318-0795 Monday to Friday from 9am – 5pm. For general inquiries or to be connected to programs and services you can contact our head office at 519-438-0068 Monday to Friday from 9am – 5pm.

OTHER RESOURCES

The following resources may be of assistance throughout the duration of your recovery.

LGBTQ2+ Youth Line

Telephone: 1-800-268-9688

www.youthline.ca

Kids Help Phone

Telephone: 1-800-668-6868

kidshelpphone.ca

Independent Legal Advice for Survivors of Sexual Assault

Telephone: 1-855-226-3905

Ontario.ca/page/independent-legal-advice-sexual-assault-victims

Speak Out Anonymous Reporting Application

If you want to make an anonymous sexual assault report, you can use Speak Out. Criminal charges cannot be laid because police will not know the identity of the victim. The information is used to track sexual violence occurring in London.

Learn more: www.londonpolice.ca (Sexual Assault FAQ's)

www.speak-out.ca/home

Reach Out- Canadian Mental Health Association

Telephone: 519-433-2023 (call or text) or 1-866-933-2023

reachout247.ca/

MY CONTACTS

Officer in Charge		
Name:		Position:
Business Phone:	Cell Phone:	E-mail:
Office Location:		LPS Incident Number:

Victim Services Worker(s)	
Name(s):	Position:
Business Phone:	E-mail(s):
Office Location: 601 Dundas Street London, Ontario N6B 1X1	Notes:

Reminder:

Have you provided your updated contact information to the Officer in Charge and your CIVSU/VSML worker?

For more information, please contact:

London Police Service

601 Dundas Street

London, Ontario

N6B 1X1

Telephone(s): (519) 661-5670