

Sexual offences involve sex without consent, unwanted sexual touching, or being forced to engage in humiliating sexual activity.

## **OUT THERE**

### **Vulnerability increases**

- in dark and deserted places at night;
- if you look vulnerable (e.g. walking alone in desolate areas);
- if you appear uncertain, for example if you do not know
- where you are going;
- if you do not lock your car doors and close your windows;
- if you talk to strangers;
- if you stop for stranded vehicles or people; or
- if your vehicle is faulty and you have to stop for help.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Be alert at traffic lights and stop streets.
- Walk close to the curb and face the on-coming traffic.
- Try and keep to well-lit areas or where there are people.
- Do not hitch-hike.
- Do not pick up hitch-hikers.
- Keep a whistle with you - and blow it if you need help.

## **At home**

- Do not allow a stranger into your home - even if he is delivering something or providing a service.
- Ask for an identity document or phone his/her office to check his/her identity.
- Invest in the best locks and security you can afford.
- Never tell anyone that you are alone at home - and make sure the children also know not to do so.
- Know your neighbours - and together plan ahead for how you will respond in a crisis.
- Know your local police station - and discuss safety matters with the police.
- Become involved with local crime prevention efforts with the community police forum or police.

## **On a date**

- Do not allow anyone to touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable
- be firm and clear and say **NO!**
- Do not leave a party or social event with someone you do not know or have just met - say **NO!**
- Ask friends for help if someone ignores you when you say **NO!**
- Remember: most rape victims know the rapist.
- **You have the right to say NO!**

## **In a case of rape**

- Try not to panic.
- Common sense is your best defence.
- You can not always defend yourself and your resistance may cause serious injury.
- If the attacker is dangerous, cooperate and try to negotiate.
- Submission is not consent.
- Try and remember what the attacker looks like - his age, race,height, hair colour, scars, tattoos, clothes, voice, jewellery.
- Scream, yell, blow your whistle or run away if you possibly can.
- Do not bath or change your clothes after an attack
- keep all the evidence so that it can be used by the police for further investigation.
- Report the crime to the Police Service straight away: go to the police station or phone **10111**.

## **After a rape**

Every victim of rape responds differently - but it is likely that you will benefit from help.

### **You may feel -**

- dirty and want to wash repeatedly;
- scared and afraid to go out;
- that it is your fault and that you are guilty; or
- you cannot sleep, have nightmares, cannot eat, cannot stop crying or that you want to forget it as quickly as possible and get on with your life.

None of these responses are unusual or unnatural

- remember that there is always someone to help you.

Victim Support programmes, psychologists, counsellors, health care or social workers, employers, friends, family or church members - ask the police official dealing with your case to recommend someone to help you.

### **What happens when you report a rape (or other sexual offences)?**

The police official will take your statement. You need not be alone - a friend or family member can be with you while you make your statement, as long as he or she is not a potential witness in your case.

If you later feel that your statement is wrong or incomplete, you can make another statement.

You can make your statement in your own language (if it may be translated).

You have the right to copy your statement. It may sometimes not be possible to get a copy immediately, but then you will get it later.

The police official will give you a case number and you must use this number whenever you want information about your case.

If necessary, the investigating officer will make sure you are examined by an accredited health care worker, who will complete a medical report and collect medical evidence.

You must make sure that the investigating officer knows how and where to contact you at all times, including when you move to another location, but it is a victim's responsibility to notify the police official of any changes in address.

### **The investigating officer will let you know -**

- when the suspect is arrested;
- if the suspect is released on bail;
- if you need to attend an identification parade;
- the date of the trial;
- when you will have to give evidence; and
- the outcome of the case.

A victim must have the responsible police official's telephone number so that he/she knows where to get information about his/her case.

The police investigate the case and then hand it over to a state lawyer called a prosecutor. The service is free to you.

Both the police official, the investigating officer and the prosecutor will be able to give you information about your case.

Get a telephone number from the investigating officer so that you know where to get information about your case.

### **What can we all do to help?**

- Join community-based Victim Support initiatives; be trained as a Volunteer.
- Report rape - and help others to report rape.
- Do not protect rapists - do not hide them in your home or community - tell the police about them.
- Bring up your boys to be real men - real men respect women and real men do not rape.

## **You have the right to say no!**

No-one has the right to force you into sexual activity, no matter what your relationship with this person is.

This means no-one can force you to have sex, or touch you in a sexual way without your consent, or force you to perform sexual activity you find unpleasant or humiliating.  
Remember - a sexual assault is NOT your fault.