



Victim Assistance Program

Walterboro Police Department

Dedicated to providing advocacy, services, and referrals when the crime occurs, during the investigation, and through participation in the criminal justice system

- **SC Crime Victims Have Constitutional Rights - To preserve and protect victims' rights to justice and due process regardless of race, sex, age, religion, or economic status. Victims of crime have the right to be treated with fairness, respect, and dignity; be free from intimidation or harm throughout the criminal and juvenile justice process; be informed about victim's rights; be reasonably informed about criminal proceedings; be informed if the accused is arrested, released, or escapes; confer with the prosecution before the case is heard in court; be present at criminal proceedings where the accused has the right to be present; be heard at proceedings affecting bond, bail, release, pleas, or sentencing; have reasonable access to documents relating to the crime before trial; receive restitution from the adult or juvenile offenders; a reasonable prompt, and final conclusion to the case. - from the Constitution of SC, Article 1, Section 24.**

Victim Assistance Program Offers Advocacy and Support

- **Liaison between law enforcement and victim by becoming the source of information about their case so that relevant information is accurately conveyed through the provider.**
- **Can help locate witnesses for law enforcement because they stay in touch with victim and often get additional information.**
- **Can give law enforcement feedback on what happened to the case in the court system. This is often a frustrating problem for officers.**
- **Trained in crisis intervention and can help calm and defuse distraught victims during times of stress (preliminary interviews, for example).**

Victim Assistance Program Offers Advocacy and Support

- **Provides appropriate information and notification to victims as mandated by the SC Crime Victims' Bill of Rights and provide orientation for victims to the courtroom and judicial process.**
- **Assists in determining the victim's perspective on such things as appropriate restitution and provide that information to the court.**
- **Assists in assuring the presence of victims and witnesses at trial and other critical stages of the proceedings when needed.**

Victim Assistance Program

Provides Services

- **Can assist with the practical needs of a victim after a crime occurs. These may range from getting someone to repair a broken window to providing transportation for a battered woman to a shelter. This type of assistance leaves the law enforcement officer free to pursue her/his primary goal, apprehension of the perpetrator.**
- **A source of training for law enforcement agencies and the community. Compiles the most effective directory of information and referral for victims available in a community - an officer need only refer a victim to it for further aid.**

Victim Assistance Program Provides Services Continued

- **Can assist victim in applying for crime victims' compensation through the SC State Office of Victim Assistance. If a crime against you or a family member cost medical or dental care, mental health counseling, lost wages from missed work, or funeral or burial expenses our office may be able to assist you. For eligibility to file Victim's Compensation:**
- **Crime must have caused physical injury, psychic trauma, or death of victim.**
- **Crime must have been reported to law enforcement within 48 hours.**

Victim Assistance Program

Provides Referrals

- **Referrals provided for court ordered counseling for offenders and their families which may focus on drug and/or alcohol abuse, anger management, stress management, dynamics of domestic violence, how to handle value conflicts, positive Self-Talk, guidelines for fair fighting, SC Laws regarding domestic violence, what is power and control, male/female socialization, cognitive restructuring and thought stopping, characteristics of the dysfunctional family, and process groups which allow individuals to discuss difficulties and problems which individuals may have encountered.**

Victim Assistance Program Provides Referrals

- **Referrals provided for victims and their families for trauma counseling and other issues related to domestic victimization including positive self-talk and assertiveness. Victims may also be referred to victim's groups, organizations offering temporary safe shelter, the SC State Office of Victim Assistance for further compensation assistance, or various other social service agencies throughout the community which assist with immediate needs such as food, medical assistance for children, transportation to appointments, childcare, and other services as needed.**

Victim Assistance Program Assists in the Restorative Community Justice Process

**Crime Occurs & Creates a Victim
Crisis for Victim & Family**

**“Restoration” which involves crisis intervention,
emotional support, resource mobilization, crime
prevention aid.**

Victim involved in both guilty-plea or finding.

**“Restoration” meaning telling your story as a victim,
involvement, restitution, vindication, reintegration.**

COMMUNITY IS RESTORED

- **Risk Reducing Factors for Violence**

Think especially hard about having a weapon of any kind in your home - a firearm in the home is MORE THAN FORTY TIMES as likely to kill or injure a family member than it is to prevent a crime from being committed. There are many other ways to protect your family such as taking self-defense classes, investing in an alarm protection system and purchasing top quality locks or jamming devices for doors and windows, initiating a neighborhood watch, or getting a watchdog for security. Problem solving is a skill that needs to be taught to children. Show them constructive ways to settle arguments and resolve conflicts without using harmful actions or language. Learning by example is one of the most effective ways to impress positive attitudes and behavior on children. Common everyday courtesy like “please” and “thank you” go a long way in easing the tensions that could potentially erupt into violence. Teach children that name-calling and teasing can quickly get out of hand. Words can move swiftly into physical contact and

Risk Reducing Behaviors Continued

- **possibly to serious violence. Children must learn to respect one another and realize that a bully is only acting on his own fears and lack of understanding. What we allow ourselves and our children to watch and listen to for entertainment can have a large impact on our lives. Movies, video games, and even the lyrics in music often portray violence as exciting, glamorous, or funny. Talk about what the possible real-life consequences or influences of these behaviors might be so that a clearer understanding can be reached. Avoid people who use drugs and alcohol and encourage your children to do the same. Studies show that drug and alcohol use is closely linked with violence, including the use of guns and other weapons. The U.S. homicide rate for persons between the ages of 15-24 is higher than the combined total rate of 11 industrialized nations.**

Avoid Becoming a Victim of a Violent Crime

- **Are you a likely target?**
 - **Men are twice as likely as women to experience robberies and aggravated assaults.**
 - **People under 25 are more likely to be victimized.**
 - **93% of all violent crimes are committed against one victim. Violent crimes are equally likely to occur during the day and night. Violent incidents occur most often on the street. Victims' homes are the next most common sites with one in four violent incidents occurring in or near the victims' homes.**

Avoid Becoming a Victim of a Violent Crime continued

- **Send the right message. Walk with purpose. Guard your physical space. Carry your possessions assertively. Stay on well-lit, well-traveled streets. Always stay aware of your surroundings - avoid use of headphones and other distractions. Let others know where you are going and when you will be back. Don't display large sums of cash in public. Keep your car in good working condition. Make sure you have enough gas to get where you are going and back. Always close windows and lock the doors even if you will only be gone a few minutes. If you think that you are being followed don't go home - go to your nearest police station, fire station, or busy store for help. Try to use the ATM during daylight hours. Take someone with you if possible. Try to use the ATM inside a busy store or bank. When finished, put your card and money away quickly and check to see that you are not being followed. If you are forced to use the ATM by someone, remember that your life is more important than your money.**

What If You're Attacked? Here's What the experts say

- **Stay calm.** Try not to panic or show signs of anger or confusion. Don't resist or refuse to give up your property.
- **Focus on escape.** Your first concern should be getting away from the assailant. If there is property involved, give it up. As soon as you can, run to an open and occupied area and yell for help. Do not run to a deserted area or alley. If you are being physically attacked and cannot get away or defend yourself, minimize injury by lying on the ground with your knees tucked up against your stomach and covering your head with your arms. Fighting back is very risky, but if you choose to fight back use all of your strength and focus on incapacitating the attacker so that you can run away. Get a description. Look at the attacker carefully and make note of the characteristics that will help

What If You're Attacked? Here's What the experts say continued

- **you give an accurate description to the police - suspect's sex, age, height, weight, race, hair and eye color, glasses, tattoos, scars, marks, and complexion. Also note the color, fabric, and condition of the attacker's clothing as well as distinguishing shoes, hats, or other items. NEVER CHASE YOUR ATTACKER. Call the police immediately and give them your name and location.**

BE SMART AND STAY SAFE!

We hope that neither you nor any of your friends or family ever find yourself the victim of a violent crime.

However, if you do ever need us we are here to help you pick up the pieces.

Walterboro Police Department
Victim Assistance Program Office
Located at City Hall
Downtown on Hampton Street
Next to the Dispatch Office