

# **Available Resources for Students**

## **Comprehensive Victim Services**

### CENTER FOR VICTIMS

3433 E Carson St, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

- 24 Hour Hotline - 1-866-644-2882
- Administrative – 412-482-3240

## **Domestic Violence Centers & Shelters**

### CENTER FOR VICTIMS

3433 E Carson St, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

- 24 Hour Hotline - 1-866-644-2882
- Administrative – 412-482-3240

### ALLE-KISKI HOPE CENTER

500 E 8th Ave, Tarentum, PA 15084

- 24 Hour Hotline - 1-888-299-4673
- Administrative - 724-224-1266

### CRISIS CENTER NORTH

333 N Braddock Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15208

- 24 Hour Hotline - 412-364-5556 or 1-866-782-0911
- Text/Chat Line – 412-444-7660 (9 am to 9 pm)

### WOMEN'S CENTER AND SHELTER OF GREATER PITTSBURGH

P.O. Box 9024 Pittsburgh, PA 15224

- 24 Hour Hotline - 412-687-8005 or Toll free 1-877-338-8255
- Legal Department - 412-355-7400
- Administrative - 412-687-8017
- Text/Chat Line - 412-744-8445 (9am to 9pm)

## **Other State & National Victim Services**

### PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF THE VICTIM ADVOCATE (OVA)

1101 South Front Street Suite 5200 Harrisburg, PA 17104

- Toll free phone number - 800.563.6399

OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME (OVC)

810 7th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20531

- Phone number - 202-307-5983

NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

202-467-8700

- Nonprofit organization that advocates for victims' rights, trains professionals who work with victims, and serves as a trusted source of information on victims' issues.

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

- 24 Hour Hotline - 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE (NOVA)

510 King St UNIT 424, Alexandria, VA 22314

- Phone number – 703-535-6682

**1-866-644-2882**

24-Hour Crisis Hotline

All Services are Free and Confidential

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Center for Victims offers  
comprehensive services to help  
people heal from the harm and trauma  
they have experienced through  
violence and crime.

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**Victim of a Crime?  
Witness to a Crime?  
Need Help?  
Start Here.**

**Center for  
Victims**

**Start Here.**

**[www.centerforvictims.org](http://www.centerforvictims.org)**

# **“Healing Trauma, Supporting Victims, and Creating Peaceful Communities”**

## **VICTIM SERVICES:**

- Temporary, Immediate Housing & Supportive Services for Domestic Violence Victims & their Children
- Assistance Obtaining Protection Orders (PFA, PFI, and SVP)
- Personal Advocate to Assist and Support during Criminal and Juvenile Justice Proceedings
- Personal Advocate to Assist and Support Rape & Sexual Assault Victims during Hospital Exams
- Counseling & Therapy for Adults, Children, Families and Groups
- Notification of an Offender's Release from Jail
- Application Assistance for Victims Compensation
- Victim Offender Dialogue

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES:**

- Trauma Education & Training including Experiential Healing Rivers Project
- Conflict Resolution and Mediation Services & Training
- Crisis Response Teams – Crisis Counseling & Support for Individuals & Groups affected by Violence
- Education, Awareness, & Wellness Initiatives

## **CONTACT US:**

**Administration: (412) 482-3240**

**Mailing Address:**

**3433 East Carson Street**

**Pittsburgh, PA 15203**

**24 Hour Hotline: 1-866-644-2882**

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CV provides services to all people regardless of age, race, creed, gender, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity and expression, physical or mental ability, culture, language ability, class, economic status, education, religion, HIV status or any other factor and strives to create a safe environment of inclusivity.

# Consent Fact Sheet

While the legal definitions of consent may vary by location and circumstance, the general concept is always the same: Consent is an ongoing process of discussing boundaries and what you're comfortable with. Let's get specific about how consent plays out in real life.

## What is consent?

Consent is an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. Consent should be clearly and freely communicated. A verbal and affirmative expression of consent can help both you and your partner to understand and respect each other's boundaries.

Consent cannot be given by individuals who are underage, intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or asleep or unconscious. If someone agrees to an activity under pressure of intimidation or threat, that isn't considered consent because it was not given freely. Unequal power dynamics, such as engaging in sexual activity with an employee or student, also mean that consent cannot be freely given.

## How does consent work?

When you're engaging in sexual activity, **consent is about communication**. And it should happen every time for every type of activity. Consenting to one activity, one time, does not mean someone gives consent for other activities or for the same activity on other occasions. For example, agreeing to kiss someone doesn't give that person permission to remove your clothes. Having sex with someone in the past doesn't give that person permission to have sex with you again in the future. It's important to discuss boundaries and expectations with your partner prior to engaging in any sexual behavior.

## You can change your mind at any time.

You can withdraw consent at any point if you feel uncomfortable. One way to do this is to clearly communicate to your partner that you are no longer comfortable with this activity and wish to stop. Withdrawing consent can sometimes be challenging or difficult to do verbally, so non-verbal cues can also be used to convey this. The best way to ensure that all parties are comfortable with any sexual activity is to talk about it, check in periodically, and make sure everyone involved consents before escalating or changing activities.

## What is enthusiastic consent?

Enthusiastic consent is a newer model for understanding consent that focuses on a positive expression of consent. Simply put, enthusiastic consent means looking for the presence of a "yes" rather than the absence of a "no." Enthusiastic consent can be expressed verbally or through nonverbal cues, such as positive body language like smiling, maintaining eye contact, and nodding. These cues alone do not necessarily represent consent, but they are additional

details that may reflect consent. It is necessary, however, to still seek verbal confirmation. The important part of consent, enthusiastic or otherwise, is checking in with your partner regularly to make sure that they are still on the same page.

# Dating Violence Fact Sheet

**Dating violence** is physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a romantic or sexual partner. It happens to women of all races and ethnicities, incomes, and education levels. It also happens across all age groups and in heterosexual and same-sex relationships. Some people call dating violence domestic abuse, especially when you live with your partner.

Dating violence includes:

- **Emotional and verbal abuse** — yelling, name-calling, bullying, isolating you from your family and friends, saying you deserve the abuse or are to blame for it, and then giving gifts to “make up” for the abuse or making promises to change
- **Sexual assault and rape** — forcing you to do any sexual act you do not want to do or doing something sexual when you’re not able to consent, such as when you’ve been drinking heavily
- **Physical abuse** — hitting, shoving, kicking, biting, throwing objects, choking, or any other aggressive contact

It can also include forcing you to get pregnant against your will, trying to influence what happens during your pregnancy, or interfering with your birth control.

Some signs of dating abuse include:<sup>1</sup>

- Forcing you to have sex when you don’t want to
- Telling you that you owe them sex in exchange for taking you out on a date
- Acting overly jealous, including constantly accusing you of cheating
- Being extremely controlling, such as telling you what to wear, forbidding you from seeing friends and family, or demanding to check your phone, email, and social media
- Constantly checking in with you and getting angry if you don’t check in with him or her
- Putting you down, including your appearance (clothes, makeup, hair, weight), intelligence, and activities
- Trying to isolate you from other people, including by insulting them

- Blaming you for the abusive behavior and listing the ways you “made him or her do it”
- Refusing to take responsibility for their own actions
- Apologizing for abuse and promising to change again and again
- Having a quick temper, so you never know what you will do or say that may cause a problem
- Not allowing you to end the relationship or making you feel guilty for leaving
- Threatening to call the authorities (police, deportation officials, child protective services, etc.) as a way to control your behavior
- Stopping you from using birth control or going to the doctor or nurse
- Committing any physical violence, such as hitting, pushing, or slapping you

None of the behavior described above is OK. Even if your partner does only a few of these things, it’s still abuse. It is never OK for someone to hit you or be cruel to you in any way.



# Domestic Violence Fact Sheet

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, psychological, or technological actions or threats of actions or other patterns of coercive behavior that influence another person within an intimate partner relationship. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.

## **Examples of Abusive Behavior Include:**

### **Physical Abuse**

Hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, etc. are types of physical abuse. This type of abuse also includes denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use upon him or her.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem is abusive. This may include, but is not limited to constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children.

### **Economic Abuse**

Controlling or restraining a person's ability to acquire, use, or maintain economic resources to which they are entitled. This includes using coercion, fraud, or manipulation to restrict a person's access to money, assets, credit, or financial information; unfairly using a person's personal economic resources, including money, assets, and credit, or exerting undue influence over a person's financial and economic behavior or decisions, including forcing default on joint or other financial obligations, exploiting powers of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship, or failing or neglecting to act in the best interests of a person to whom one has a fiduciary duty.

## **Psychological Abuse**

Elements of psychological abuse include - but are not limited to - causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work.

## **Technological Abuse**

An act or pattern of behavior that is intended to harm, threaten, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor another person that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to: internet enabled devices, online spaces and platforms, computers, mobile devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.

Domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, sex, or gender identity. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Domestic violence occurs in both opposite-sex and same-sex relationships and can happen to intimate partners who are married, living together, dating, or share a child.

Domestic violence not only affects those who are abused, but also has a substantial effect on family members, friends, co-workers, other witnesses, and the community at large. Children, who grow up witnessing domestic violence, are among those seriously affected by this crime. Frequent exposure to violence in the home not only predisposes children to numerous social and physical problems, but also teaches them that violence is a normal way of life - therefore, increasing their risk of becoming society's next generation of victims and abusers.

This discussion of domestic violence is intended to educate the public about the dynamics of abuse in intimate partner relationships, as well as to help victims understand their experience and family and friends of victims to recognize signs of abuse in the relationships of their loved ones. The Violence Against Women Act contains a definition of domestic violence that governs the programs funded under the Act. The discussion here does not alter the definition in VAWA.

Sources: National Domestic Violence Hotline, National Center for Victims of Crime, and WomensLaw.org.

# Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault Fact Sheet

In cases of drug-facilitated sexual assault, survivors often blame themselves. Remember—you are not to blame. You are the only one allowed to make choices for your body. Using drugs or alcohol is never an excuse for assault and does not mean that it was your fault.

## What is drug-facilitated sexual assault?

Drug-facilitated sexual assault occurs when alcohol or drugs are used to compromise an individual's ability to consent to sexual activity. These substances make it easier for a perpetrator to commit sexual assault because they lower inhibitions, reduce a person's ability to resist, and can prevent them from remembering details of the assault. Drugs and alcohol can cause diminished capacity, a legal term that varies in definition from state to state.

You may have heard the term "date rape drugs" to refer to substances that perpetrators use to commit sexual assault, such as "roofies." **Alcohol is the most common substance used to perpetrate drug-facilitated sexual assault.** Drug-facilitated sexual assault can happen to anyone, by anyone, whether the perpetrator is an intimate partner, stranger, or someone you've known for a while.

## How it happens

There are two main ways that drug-facilitated sexual assault occurs: 1) when the perpetrator takes advantage of a someone's voluntary use of drugs or alcohol and, 2) when the perpetrator intentionally forces a victim to consume drugs or alcohol with or without their knowledge.

The type of drug-facilitated sexual assault you might think about first is the kind in which a perpetrator slips a drug into someone's drink. Though many survivors have experienced this, for many young people, especially on college campuses, drug-facilitated sexual assault can take a variety of forms.

## Drug-facilitated sexual assault can look like:

- Coercing or pressuring someone beyond their comfort zone to ingest more drugs or alcohol or different substances than they are comfortable with.
- Ignoring or refusing to help someone who says they've had too much to drink or is having a negative drug experience and needs help.

- Initiating sexual contact with someone because they are intoxicated, and less likely to resist.
- Refusing to tell someone what is in their drink or the type of dosage of drug they are ingesting.
- A perpetrator may intentionally drug someone, resulting in a situation in which it is easier to manipulate the circumstances and commit an assault. Perpetrators use a variety of substances to incapacitate a victim.

### **Commonly used substances:**

- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance in drug-facilitated sexual assault.
- Prescription drugs like sleep aids, anxiety medication, muscle relaxers, and tranquilizers may also be used by perpetrators.
- Street drugs, like GHB, rohypnol ("roofies"), ecstasy, and ketamine can be added to drinks without changing the color, flavor, or odor of the beverage.

### **It is not your fault**

Many survivors have strong feelings of self-blame after drug-facilitated sexual assault. They may feel that their choice to drink or to use drugs put them in a dangerous situation that led to the assault. It's important to remember that if a sexual assault occurs under these circumstances, it is still not your fault. When you choose to use drugs or alcohol, you are not choosing to be sexually assaulted. The blame for this crime falls ONLY on the perpetrator.

### **How will I know if I've been drugged?**

Depending on the substance, the initial effects of a drug can either go unnoticed or become apparent very quickly. Being familiar with the warning signs can help alert you to the possibility of drugs in your system. If you notice any of the following warning signs in yourself or someone you know, reach out to someone you trust immediately. If you notice these symptoms in another person, you can take steps to keep that person safe.

- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling drunk when you have consumed little to no alcohol
- Loss of bowel or bladder control
- Nausea
- Sudden body temperature change that could be signaled by sweating or chattering teeth

- Sudden increase in dizziness, disorientation, or blurred vision
- Waking up with no memory, or missing large portions of memories

### **Preserving Evidence**

If you suspect you were drugged, you can take steps to preserve the evidence for an investigation. Many of these drugs leave the body quickly, within 12 to 72 hours. If you can't get to a hospital immediately, save your urine in a clean, sealable container as soon as possible, and place it in the refrigerator or freezer. Call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) to find a hospital or medical center that can provide you with a sexual assault forensic exam and test your blood and urine for substances.

Source: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

# WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

## Fact Sheet

*Sexual violence affects women, men and children throughout their lives and can be devastating for individuals, families, and communities. However, help is available. Together, we can change the conditions that contribute to sexual violence.*

### What is sexual violence?

Sexual violence means that someone forces or manipulates someone else into unwanted sexual activity without their consent. Reasons someone might not consent include fear, age, illness, disability, and/or influence of alcohol or other drugs. Anyone can experience sexual violence including: children, teens, adults, and elders. Those who sexually abuse can be acquaintances, family members, trusted individuals or strangers.

### Forms of sexual violence

- Rape or sexual assault
- Child sexual assault and incest
- Intimate partner sexual assault
- Unwanted sexual contact/touching
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual exploitation
- Showing one's genitals or naked body to other(s) without consent
- Masturbating in public
- Watching someone in a private act without their knowledge or permission

### Facts about sexual violence

**FACT: Chances are you know someone who has been sexually assaulted.**

- Sexual violence affects people of all genders, ages, races, religions, incomes, abilities, professions, ethnicities, and

sexual orientations. However, social inequalities can heighten the risk.

- By age 18, 1 in 4 girls will be sexually assaulted; by age 18, 1 in 6 boys will be assaulted (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis & Smith, 1990).
- At some time in their lives, 1 in 6 women have experienced an attempted or completed rape; more than half occurred before the woman was 18, and 22% before age 12 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).
- During their lives, 1 in 33 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape; 75% occurred before the men were 18, and 48% before age 12 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

**FACT: Victims usually know their assaulter.**

- People who sexually assault usually attack someone they know – a friend, classmate, neighbor, coworker, or relative.
- Of adults, 73% knew the attacker, 38% were friends of the attacker, 28% were an intimate partner of the attacker, and 7% were a relative of the attacker (Maston & Klaus, 2005).
- Child victims knew the offender before the attack 90% of the time (Greenfeld, 1996).
- About 40% of sexual assaults take place in the victim's own home. Another 20% occur in the home of a



friend, neighbor, or relative (Greenfeld, 1997).

**FACT: Victims are never at fault for a sexual assault.**

- It doesn't matter what someone is wearing or how they are acting, no one asks to be raped.
- People who sexually assault often use force, threat, or injury.
- An absence of injuries to the victim does not indicate the victim consented.

**FACT: Rape is the least reported and convicted violent crime in the U.S.**

There are many reasons why victims may choose not to report to law enforcement or tell anyone about what happened to him/her. Some include:

- Concern for not being believed
- Fear of the attackers getting back at him/her
- Embarrassment or shame
- Fear of being blamed
- Pressure from others not to tell
- Distrust of law enforcement
- Belief that there is not enough evidence
- Desire to protect the attacker

Many victims who do report a rape or sexual assault find that there is no arrest or conviction.

- Probability of arrest after a report is 50.8% (Reynolds, 1999) and the probability of a rapist being sent to prison is 16.3% (Reynolds, 1999).

**FACT: Sexual violence is preventable.**

By working with your community's sexual assault center, you can:

- Model supportive relationships and behaviors with your friends and families
- Stand up for victims and believe them
- Speak up when you hear harmful comments or witness violent acts

- Create policies at your workplace or school system to stop sexual violence and help victims
- Coordinate a community event to raise awareness about sexual violence or talk with community members about ways they can get involved
- Talk with your legislators and ask them to support prevention and victim services

**FACT: Help is available**

- Local sexual assault centers can provide help. In crisis situations, contact RAINN at 1-800-656-4673. For more information, visit <http://www.nsvrc.org>.

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## References

- Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis I.A., & Smith, C. (1990). *Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors*. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 14, 19-28.
- Greenfeld, L.A. (1996). *Child Victimization: Violent offenders and their victims*. (NCJ 153258). Retrieved from Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/CVVOATVX.PDF>
- Greenfeld, L.A. (1997). *Sex offenses and offenders: An analysis of data on rape and sexual assault* (NCJ 163392). Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Maston, C., & Klaus, P. (2005) *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2003 statistical tables: National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCJ 207811). Retrieved from Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cvus03.pdf>
- Reynolds, M.O. (1999). *Crime and punishment in America: 1999* (Report No. 229). Retrieved from National Center for Policy Analysis: <http://www.ncpa.org/pdfs/st229.pdf>
- Tjaden, P. and Thoennes, N. (2000). *Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women: finding from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf>

# Stalking Fact Sheet

## What is stalking?

"Stalking is a pattern of repeated and unwanted attention, harassment, contact, or any other course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear," according to the Department of Justice. Similar to crimes of sexual violence, stalking is about power and control.

Stalking laws and definitions differ from state to state. Stalking behavior can take many forms including:

- Making threats against someone, or that person's family or friends
- Non-consensual communication, such as repeated phone calls, emails, text messages, and unwanted gifts
- Repeated physical or visual closeness, like waiting for someone to arrive at certain locations, following someone, or watching someone from a distance
- Any other behavior used to contact, harass, track, or threaten someone

## What is "the use of technology to stalk"?

One of the ways perpetrators stalk victims is through the use of technology. You may have heard the term cyberstalking to refer to these types of interactions. "Use of technology to stalk" is a broad term that is used to cover all forms of stalking that rely on technology.

## Some uses of technology to stalk include:

- Persistently sending unwanted communication through the internet, such as spamming someone's email inbox or social media platform
- Posting threatening or personal information about someone on public internet forums
- Video-voyeurism, or installing video cameras that give the stalker access to someone's personal life
- Using GPS or other software tracking systems to monitor someone without their knowledge or consent
- Using someone's computer and/or spyware to track their computer activity
- As technology and digital platforms continue to grow, so do the chances that someone could interact with you in an unwanted, sexual manner. Not all of these behaviors are



considered stalking, but they can be violating and make you feel uncomfortable. Learn more about the different ways people can use technology to hurt others.

### **What are some common reactions to being stalked?**

The DOJ uses “fear” to define the experience of being stalked, but there are other reactions that are just as important to consider. You might feel anxious, nervous, isolated, become stressed, or develop signs of depression.

### **What should I do if I’m being stalked?**

If you think you are being stalked, please know you are right to be concerned. Stalking may escalate in behavior. Consider the following tips to increase your safety and effectively report the crime.

- Try to avoid the person stalking you. This can be difficult at times, especially if the person stalking you is close to you or your family.
- If you are being stalked through communication technology, like email or text messaging, make it clear that you wish to stop contact. Once you’ve made it clear, do not respond to further communication.
- Keep any evidence received from the stalker such as text messages, voicemails, letters, packages, emails, etc., but do not respond. You can do this by taking screenshots of conversations or even printing out email exchanges.
- Inform family, friends, supervisors, and co-workers of the situation.
- If you have children, create a code word that lets them know they need to leave the house or call the police.
- Consider reporting the stalking to local law enforcement.
- Keeping an accurate journal or log of all incidents connected to the stalking.
- Become familiar with computer safety and ways to stay safe online.
- To learn more about stalking and safety planning visit the Stalking Resource Center.

Source: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)

## **Start Here**

For more detailed answers to these or any additional questions, please call our 24-Hour Hotline at 1-866-644-2882. Caring, knowledgeable professionals can provide immediate help and guidance.

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### **1. Do I need to hire an attorney?**

No. As a victim of crime, you are a witness for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Allegheny County District Attorney's Office will provide a prosecutor to process your case.

### **2. Are Center for Victims' Counselor Advocates attorneys? What exactly is a Counselor Advocate?**

No. Our Counselor Advocates are not attorneys and cannot give legal advice. They are knowledgeable about the processes of the criminal and juvenile justice system, victims' rights, the impacts of trauma, victimization, and grief and loss.

A Counselor Advocate is your support person to help you get through the various systems. They will provide crisis and supportive counseling to help you heal from your victimization and/or loss.

### **3. Do you work for the District Attorney's Office or the police?**

No. However, Center for Victims works closely with the District Attorney's Office and the police to assist you in your interactions with them and to ensure your rights. Center for Victims is a separate, non-profit organization, serving the needs of crime victims, witnesses, families and communities impacted by violence.

### **4. The criminal system seems so unfair towards victims. Do victims have any rights?**

Yes. The system can seem overwhelming and sometimes focused on the rights of the offender. However, as a crime victim in Pennsylvania, you do have rights. Please ask for a copy of the "Victims' Rights" Introductory Flyer, talk to your Counselor Advocate, or call our hotline for a complete explanation of your rights.

### **5. I think my offender is in jail, can you check for me?**

Yes. Center for Victims operates an Offender Release Notification Program when the offender is incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail. Contact CV's hotline (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) for enrollment information. If you are eligible for the program and enrolled, you will be notified of the release or transfer of your offender. If your offender is serving time in a state facility, CV will assist you in registering for the State Victim Input and Notification Programs.

**6. Will you call my employer to let them know I have to appear in court?**

All of CV's services are confidential. However, we are happy to speak to anyone on your behalf, if you give us written permission to do so.

**7. Do I have to testify in court?**

Most often, victims and witnesses are needed to testify in court. Sometimes, victims and witnesses testify on more than one occasion. This question really depends on the circumstances of your individual case. Please contact CV and ask to speak to a Counselor Advocate.

**8. I feel like I'm going crazy. Am I?**

Something terrible has happened to you or your family. Perhaps, it has changed how you view yourself, others, and the world. You may feel like you're going crazy or have lost control. It is not uncommon for people to experience a variety of reactions to a traumatic experience. CV's professional Counselor Advocates and therapists are available to talk with you. Please call our 24-hour hotline.

**9. Will I feel this way forever? How long will it take until I feel better?**

There is no one answer to this question, because every situation and person is different. Healing takes time, but you can recover. It's important to take things one day at a time and get the help you need. CV's professional Counselor Advocates and therapists are available to talk with you more. Call our 24-hour hotline.

**10. How much do your services cost?**

CV offers services to victims, witnesses, and significant others free of charge. Please ask for a copy of the "Services for Victims and Witnesses" Introductory Flyer for a listing of available services.

**11. I can't afford to pay the medical bills for the treatment I received after being assaulted. Can you help?**

Yes. The Pennsylvania Victims Compensation Assistance Program covers various types of expenses, including medical expenses. For more information, ask for a copy of the "Victims Compensation and Financial Remedies" Introductory Flyer, and contact CV to see if you are eligible.

**12. In cases of homicide, how does a prosecutor make the decision to pursue a sentence of death?**

The prosecutor must review the case evidence to determine if one or more aggravating circumstances exist. Aggravating circumstances are extremely specific conditions which are defined by law. At least one aggravating circumstance must be present in order for the prosecutor to pursue the death penalty. For more information, ask your Counselor Advocate.

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**Getting information is the first step to getting help. Let  
Center for Victims help you find the answers you need.**

**24-Hour Hotline:  
1-866-644-2882**

## Victims' Bill of Rights

When someone becomes a victim of violence or crime, it can be one of the most devastating experiences of their life. The state of Pennsylvania has enacted a Victims' Bill of Rights to ensure victims are informed, protected and supported as much as possible through the criminal and juvenile justice system, and personal recovery.

### Victims of crime have the following rights:

- To receive basic information concerning the services available for victims of crime.
- To be notified of certain significant actions and proceedings within the criminal and juvenile justice systems pertaining to their case. This includes all of the following:
  - Access to information regarding whether the juvenile was detained or released following arrest and whether a petition alleging delinquency has been filed.
  - Immediate notification of a juvenile's pre-adjudication escape from a detention center or shelter facility and of the juvenile's subsequent apprehension.
  - Access to information regarding the grant or denial of bail to an adult.
  - Immediate notification of an adult offender's pretrial escape from a local correctional facility and of the offender's subsequent apprehension.
- To be accompanied at all criminal and all juvenile proceedings in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. § 6336 (relating to conduct of hearings) by a family member, a victim advocate or other person providing assistance or support.
- In cases involving a personal injury crime of burglary, to submit prior comment to the prosecutor's office or juvenile probation office, as appropriate to the circumstances of the case, on the potential reduction or dropping of any charge or changing of a plea in a criminal or delinquency proceeding or diversion of any case, including an informal adjustment or consent decree.
- To have opportunity to offer prior comment on the sentencing of a defendant or the disposition of a delinquent child, to include the submission of a written and oral victim impact statement detailing the physical, psychological and economic effects of the crime on the victim and the victim's family. The written statement shall be included in any predisposition or presentence report submitted to the court. Victim impact statements shall be considered by a court when determining the disposition of a juvenile or sentence of an adult.
- To have notice and to provide prior comment on a judicial recommendation that the defendant participate in a motivational boot camp pursuant to the act of December 19, 1990 (P.L. 1391, No. 215), known as the Motivational Boot Camp Act.

- Upon request of the victim of a personal injury crime, to have the opportunity to submit written comment or oral testimony at a disposition review hearing, which comment or testimony shall be considered by a court when reviewing the disposition of the juvenile.
- To be restored, to the extent possible, to the precrime economic status through the provision of restitution, compensation and the expeditious return of property, which is seized as evidence in the case when in the judgement of the prosecutor the evidence is no longer needed for prosecution of the case.
- In personal injury crimes where the adult is sentenced to a State correctional facility, to be:
  - Given the opportunity to provide prior comment on and to receive State post-processing release decisions, including work release, furlough, parole, pardon or community treatment center placement; and
  - Provided immediate notice of an escape of the adult and of subsequent apprehension; and
  - Given the opportunity to receive notice of and to provide prior comment on a recommendation sought by the Department of Corrections that the offender participate in a motivational boot camp pursuant to the Motivational Boot Camp Act.
- In personal injury crimes where the adult is sentenced to a local correctional facility, to:
  - Receive notice of the date of the release of the adult, including work release, furlough, parole, release from a boot camp or community treatment center placement; and
  - Be provided with immediate notice of an escape of the adult and of subsequent apprehension.
- If, upon the request of the victim of a personal injury crime committed by a juvenile, the juvenile is ordered to residential placement, a shelter facility or a detention center, to:
  - Receive prior notice of the date of the release of the juvenile, including temporary leave or home pass.
  - Be provided with:
    - ◊ Immediate notice of an escape of the juvenile, including failure to return from temporary leave or home pass; and
    - ◊ Immediate notification of reaprehension of the juvenile.
  - Be provided with notice of transfer of a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent from a placement facility that is contrary to a previous court order or placement plan approved at a disposition review hearing and to have the opportunity to express a written objection prior to the release or transfer of the juvenile.
- If an adult is subject to an order under 23 Pa.C.S. Ch. 61 (relating to protection from abuse) and is committed to a local correctional facility for a violation of the order or for a personal injury crime against a victim protected by the order, to receive immediate notice of the release of the adult on bail.
- To receive notice if an adult is committed to a mental health facility from a State correctional institution and notice of the discharge, transfer or escape of the adult from the mental health facility.
- To have assistance in the preparation of, submission of and follow-up on financial assistance claims to the bureau.
- To be notified of the details of the final disposition of the case of a juvenile consistent with 42 Pa.C.S. §6336(f) (relating to the conduct of hearings).

- Upon the request of the victim of a personal injury crime, to be notified of the termination of the courts' jurisdiction.

## Media Rights

(These rights are not guaranteed by legislation or a court of law)

### **You have the right to:**

1. Say “no” to an interview.
2. Select a spokesperson to represent you.
3. Select the time and location for an interview.
4. Ask for a specific reporter.
5. Refuse an interview with a specific reporter even though you have given interviews to other reporters
6. Say “no” to an interview even though you have given interviews before.
7. Release a written statement through a spokesperson instead of an interview.
8. Keep children out of an interview.
9. Not answer any questions you are uncomfortable with or that you feel are inappropriate.
10. Know in advance the direction the story about your victimization is going to take.
11. Avoid a press conference atmosphere and speak to only one reporter at a time.
12. Demand a correction when wrong information is reported.
13. Ask that offensive photographs or visuals are taken out of television broadcasts or printed publications.
14. Give a television interview using a silhouette, or a newspaper interview without having your photograph taken.
15. Completely give your side of the story if you feel the reporter is not asking the questions you feel need to be asked.
16. Refrain from answering reporters' questions during the trial.
17. File a formal complaint against a journalist.
18. Grieve in private.
19. Be treated at all times with dignity and respect by the media.

*—Adapted by Center for Victims from the National Center for Victims of Crime*