

WHAT HAPPENS IF I'VE BEEN RAPED OR ASSAULTED...



Step 1

Go to the police station to open a case. The officer will take your statement. This means that they will ask you what happened and write down your story. You should ask the officer to read the story to you when he's finished to make sure that he understood you correctly. Do not sign the statement unless it is 100% correct. An officer should then take you to a hospital or clinic to get a medical exam (in rape cases) or provide you with a J88 form.

Step 2

Go to the hospital or clinic to get a medical exam. If you've been raped, you should go within 72 hours and make sure you do not shower before you go. This is because there might be DNA on you that can be used to find the person who hurt you. The doctor will fill out a form called a J88 which will be added to your file, called a docket. This form is later used as evidence in Court to support your story.



Step 3

Meet with the Prosecutor to talk about your statement. Once the police have opened a docket for you, it will be given to a prosecutor and you will be assigned an investigation officer, who is a police officer in charge of your case. A prosecutor is a lawyer for the state and their job is to make sure that people who commit crimes go to jail. The prosecutor will want to know exactly what happened to you and make sure that your statement to the police is correct. They will also prepare you for being a witness in court.

Step 4

Tell your story in court as a witness. When the case goes to trial, you will be asked to tell your story in court, which is called "giving evidence" in court. It is very important that you stay calm and tell the truth. The lawyer representing the person who hurt you will try to make it seem like you are lying. So it is very important that you do not panic and just remain calm while telling your story and answering questions.





Step 5

Go to court for the judgment and sentence. When the trial is finished, the judge or magistrate will read the judgment and sentence in court. This is very important because it will tell you whether the person who hurt you is found guilty and how they will be punished. Depending on the crime, they might go to jail or they might just have to pay the court a fine. Sometimes they get a “suspended sentence”, which means that they will not go to jail immediately but if they do anything to hurt you again, they can go to jail without another trial. If you cannot go to court for the judgment, the investigating officer should contact you to tell you the outcome.

Step 6

Go for counselling as soon as possible after the attack! Even if you think you are fine, being attacked by someone is a very difficult and traumatising experience and it’s always a good idea to go speak to someone about what happened to you.



If you have any questions or concerns, please contact LvA at info@lva.org.za