

PREPARING FOR COURT

What to Wear

- Dress comfortably. Do not stress about finding something new to wear, but dress in a way that you will feel confident. Keep in mind it is important to show respect for the judge and the court of law, and the way you dress is indicative of that.

When to Arrive

- Please arrive at the court house at least 30 minutes before your hearing is scheduled. Your assigned Victim Advocate will be in touch with when and where to meet them.
- It is important to be on time in case your attorney has questions for you before your hearing begins.

In the Hearing

- You are welcome to bring a support person (if available). If it would make you more comfortable, you can also bring a small item of comfort that will not be distracting to the judge (i.e., a photograph of loved ones, etc.).
- Please arrange for childcare if possible. In order for you to be focused on the court proceedings, we encourage to try and find childcare so that your time and attention do not need to be split when you are at court.
- You will likely have questions or comments during the proceedings. Please write down your questions and your attorney will answer them as soon as your attorney is available.

Other Courtroom Etiquette

- When addressing the judge, always use the title “Your Honor.”
- Please do not chew gum, smoke, eat, or drink anything in the courtroom.
- Please turn off your phone before entering the courtroom.
- There will likely be multiple cases being heard during the session that day. Please be prepared to be patient.



TIPS FOR TESTIFYING

*Your job is to answer the questions you are asked.
Trust your attorney to do the rest.*

- Be truthful.
- Listen carefully to the question – and wait until the entire question is asked.
- Answer ONLY the question that was asked.
 - If you are asked a “yes” or “no” question, only answer “yes” or “no.”
 - Your attorney will ask the necessary follow-up questions.
 - Do not volunteer information unless you are specifically asked for it.
- Do not guess.
 - If you do not remember, say “I do not recall” or “I do not remember.”
 - If you do not know, say, “I do not know.”
- Ask for clarification if needed.
 - If you do not hear a question, say something like, “Can you please repeat?”
 - If you do not understand what you are being asked, say something like, “Can you please rephrase?”
- Try to remain calm.
 - We understand you may be experiencing various emotions, and that is okay! Take a deep breath and remember that you are not alone.
 - Always be courteous, even if the attorney questioning you appears discourteous.
- Provide only the facts.
 - You are to only testify to things that you have experienced or witnessed. You do not need to assume why someone else did something.
- Speak clearly.
 - Answer all questions clearly, slowly, and loud enough so that everyone in the courtroom can easily hear you.
- Stop immediately when interrupted.
 - If the judge interrupts you or if you hear an attorney say, “objection,” stop talking immediately.
 - Wait for the judge to tell you to continue before answering any further.