



ODPP
New South Wales

Witness Assistance Service

Support for victims
of crime

Easy Read version





How to use this document



We are the New South Wales Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

We wrote this document.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is also a list of these words on page 19.



You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- read this document
- find more information.



This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

It only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

[www.odpp.nsw.gov.au/victims-witnesses/
witness-assistance-service](http://www.odpp.nsw.gov.au/victims-witnesses/witness-assistance-service)

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What is WAS?



The Witness Assistance Service (WAS) is a support service for victims of crimes that have happened in NSW.



In this document, we say 'victims' when we talk about people who a crime happened to.

We know that some people choose other words.



WAS supports some people who have to go to court.

This includes:



- people who are a victim of a crime and need to tell the court what happened



- people who are a family member of a victim of a crime.



WAS also supports some **witnesses** of crime.



A witness is a person who saw a crime happen.

They can share what they saw or heard to the court.



WAS Officers have the training and skills to support victims of crimes.

For example, training to know how to support people who have experienced **trauma**.



Trauma is the way you feel about something bad that happened to you.

For example, you might feel scared or stressed.

Trauma can affect you for a long time.



WAS also has First Nations Officers.



They help WAS provide **culturally safe** support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of crimes.



When something is culturally safe, people feel:

- respected and heard
- safe to be who they are.



WAS can also support **multicultural** people who are victims of crimes.

Multicultural people:

- come from different backgrounds
- speak languages other than English.



WAS uses **interpreters** to help support victims of crimes.



An interpreter is someone who:

- uses your language
- helps you understand what someone is saying.

How can WAS support you?

WAS Officers can help you understand how:



- courts work



- how you can give **evidence**.

When you give evidence, you talk about what happened to you.



WAS Officers will work with the **lawyer** in charge of your court case to help explain this.



A lawyer is someone who:

- understands the law
- helps other people understand the law.



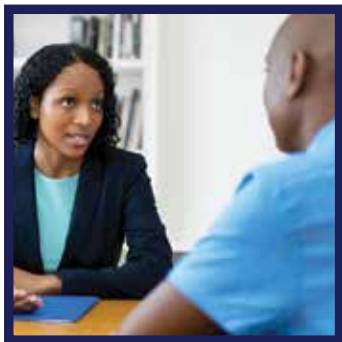
WAS Officers will share information about supports and services you can use.



WAS Officers can share information about your **rights** at court.

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



WAS Officers can also help you get ready for court.



You can find out more about how WAS Officers can support you at court on our website.

www.odpp.nsw.gov.au/publications/all

What crimes can WAS help victims of?



WAS Officers support victims of domestic and family violence.



Domestic and family violence is when someone close to you hurts you, such as:

- your partner, like your boyfriend or girlfriend
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.



They also support victims of sexual violence.



Sexual violence is when someone:

- makes you do sexual things you don't want to do
- does something sexual to you that you don't want them to do.



WAS Officers support family members of a person whose life was ended by someone else.



This includes if a person's life was ended by someone else in a car crash.

How might crime affect you?



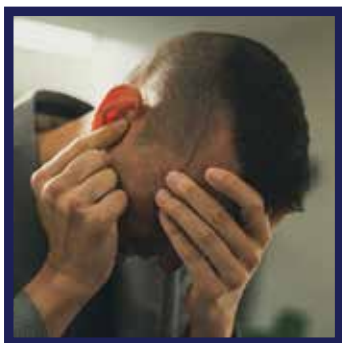
Crime can affect your and your family's feelings.

Crime affects everyone in different ways.

For example, some people might:



- find it harder to focus and sleep



- feel very sad for a long time



- worry about being safe more than they did before the crime.



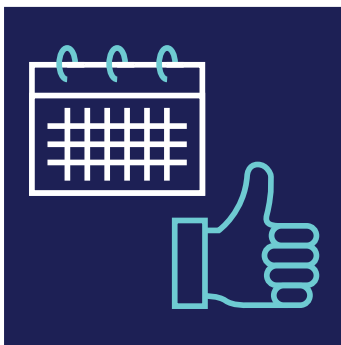
Some people might keep thinking about how the crime happened.

They might think about what could have happened differently.



Some people might also have a range of feelings that come and go.

For example, angry feelings changing to sad feelings.



All of these feelings are normal.

They might get better with time.



Support services might help you manage how a crime affects your feelings.

Other supports

There are other supports you can use if you've experienced a crime:



Homicide Victims Support Group

1800 191 777



Victims Services

www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au



Victims Access Line

1800 633 063



Road Trauma Support Group NSW

www.roadtraumasupportnsw.org



NSW Health Sexual Assault Services

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/sexualassault/
Pages/health-sas-services.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/sexualassault/Pages/health-sas-services.aspx)

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Culturally safe

When something is culturally safe, people feel:

- respected and heard
- safe to be who they are.



Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence is when someone close to you hurts you, such as:

- your partner, like your boyfriend or girlfriend
- a member of your family
- someone who takes care of you
- someone you live with.



Evidence

When you give evidence, you talk about what happened to you.



Interpreter

An interpreter is someone who:

- uses your language
- helps you understand what someone is saying.



Lawyer

A lawyer is someone who:

- understands the law
- helps other people understand the law.



Multicultural

Multicultural people:

- come from different backgrounds
- speak languages other than English.



Rights

Rights are rules about how people must treat you:

- fairly
- equally.



Sexual violence

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- makes you do sexual things you don't want to do
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Trauma

Trauma is the way you feel about something bad that happened to you.

For example, you might feel scared or stressed.

Trauma can affect you for a long time.



Witness

A witness is a person who saw a crime happen.

They can share what they saw or heard to the court.

Contact us



You can visit our website.

www.odpp.nsw.gov.au



You can also call WAS for support.



You can call one of the WAS offices on the next page.

You can call the
Sydney office.

+61 2 9285 8606

You can call the
Parramatta office.

+61 2 9891 9800

You can call the
Campbelltown office.

+61 2 4629 2811

You can call the
Penrith office.

+61 2 4721 6100

You can call the
Gosford office.

+61 2 4337 1111

You can call the
Dubbo office.

+61 2 6881 3300

You can call the
Wollongong office.

+61 2 4224 7111

You can call the
Newcastle office.

+61 2 4907 4500

You can call the
Wagga Wagga office.

+61 2 6925 8400

You can call the
Lismore office.

+61 2 6627 2222

Support to talk to us

If you speak a language other than English, you can call:



Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

13 14 50



You can use the National Relay Service if you:

- are deaf or hard of hearing
- find it hard to speak using the phone.

www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs



You can choose the type of service you need to help make your phone call.

For example, their TTY service (Type and Listen).



You can then ask them to connect you to our phone number.

+61 2 9285 8606

Notes

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