

**New York County  
District Attorney's Office  
Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit**  
One Hogan Place  
Room 666  
New York, NY 10013  
212-335-9373  
Lisa Friel, *Chief*

**Northern Manhattan Office**  
*Located in the Harlem  
State Office Building*  
163 West 125th Street  
7th Floor  
New York, NY 10027  
212-864-7884

**Witness Aid Services Unit**  
100 Centre Street  
Room 231  
New York, NY 10013  
212-335-9040  
212-335-9500 (TTY)

**Website**  
[www.manhattanda.org](http://www.manhattanda.org)

# Sexual Assault and the Criminal Justice System



**CYRUS R. VANCE, JR.**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY





CYRUS R. VANCE, JR.  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

For many decades, survivors of sexual assault were denied access to the criminal justice system by archaic laws and by people insensitive to their needs. The pioneering work of our Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit has brought about legislative reform, improvements to victim support, and a major increase in our ability to bring sex offenders to justice. As new scientific technology, like dna analysis, enhances our ability to prosecute sex offenses, we will continue our efforts to make the system responsive to the needs of victims of sexual violence. I hope that victims and all interested parties will find the information in this pamphlet helpful.

Sincerely,

Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### **I have been the victim of a sexual assault.**

#### **What should I do?**

Get help immediately. The best course of action is to call 911. Police officers will respond and take a report. They will transport you to a hospital or doctor, so that you can be examined and an evidence collection kit can be prepared. Photographs of your injuries will be taken, and your clothing will be secured to be tested for evidence that might link a suspect to the crime. If you are reluctant to call the police, be sure to tell a family member or friend at once. Seek advice from someone you trust, so that you feel safe and get medical attention. You can also call the Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for guidance.

#### **Won't I be embarrassed to discuss this?**

The NYPD and New York County District Attorney's Office have specialized units with detectives and lawyers trained to handle these cases specifically. Not only do they have a lot of experience working on these issues, but they are trained to be sensitive to your concerns as a survivor of sexual assault. They will make you comfortable, explain the steps of the process to you, answer all your questions, and provide counseling to support you through the investigation. Most of all, they understand that what happened to you is not your fault.

**What happens when my assailant is arrested?**

There is a strong likelihood that the person who attacked you will be arrested. In many cases, the victim and offender are acquaintances, and it is easy for the police to find the offender.

In other instances, new scientific techniques like DNA technology and DNA databanks assist the Special Victims Squad in identifying and apprehending the attacker. You may need to go to the police station to view a line-up or help the detectives with parts of the investigation.

During the investigation or after the arrest, a senior assistant district attorney in the Sex Crimes Prosecution Unit will be assigned to your case. That lawyer will work with you from the outset through the conclusion of the court proceedings. The defendant will either hire a lawyer or have one assigned by the court. The assistant district attorney will proceed with the case against the assailant on behalf of the People of the State of New York.

The criminal case begins with the courtroom arraignment of the attacker, and a determination about whether or not bail will be set in the case. You will be advised of that decision. The prosecutor will work with you during every phase of the case, including the trial.

**Is it true that few rapists are convicted of their crimes?**

No. Over the past thirty years, legislative reform and scientific advances have resulted in a greater number of successful prosecutions of sex offenders. In addition, our specialized unit – in cooperation with the NYPD and the scientists at the DNA labs – has developed creative strategies to enhance the case investigations and to make it possible

for most women to see that justice is achieved in the courtroom. Participation in the criminal justice system is, we have found, a significant way to help survivors recover from the trauma of the sexual assault.

**What if I cannot make an identification of my attacker?**

In some cases the witness cannot identify the assailant by sight. Recent scientific advances have resulted in the dramatic use of DNA technology — known as genetic fingerprinting — to specifically link an assailant to a particular crime. Evidence seized by the police at the crime scene such as bed linens, clothing, and items touched by the offender, plus physical evidence taken by forensic examiners at the hospital, frequently contains biological material that can uniquely identify a specific individual. The biological material is analyzed and the results are entered into local, state, and federal DNA databanks that have identified scores of criminals, even in cases in which victims never saw their attackers.

**Our office can provide or help you obtain a variety of services including:**

- individual or group counseling
- appointments for medical examination or treatment
- transportation to court proceedings
- advocacy on your behalf with other agencies
- introductions to other crisis counseling agencies

**New York Police Department resources and services  
for victims of sexual assault:**

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Special Victims Division 646-610-8718

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Special Victims Liaison Unit 646-610-7272

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Manhattan Spec. Victims Squad 212-694-3010

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1st Precinct 212-334-0611

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5th Precinct 212-334-0711

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6th Precinct 212-741-4811

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7th Precinct 212-477-7311

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9th Precinct 212-477-7811

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10th Precinct 212-741-8211

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13th Precinct 212-477-7411

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Midtown South Precinct 212-239-9811

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17th Precinct 212-826-3211

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Midtown North Precinct 212-767-8400

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19th Precinct 212-452-0600

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20th Precinct 212-580-6411

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Central Park Precinct 212-570-4820

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23rd Precinct 212-860-6411

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24th Precinct 212-678-1811

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25th Precinct 212-860-6511

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26th Precinct 212-678-1311

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28th Precinct 212-678-1611

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30th Precinct 212-690-8811

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32nd Precinct 212-690-6311

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33rd Precinct 212-927-3200

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34th Precinct 212-927-9711

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**New York County District Attorney's Office  
Sex Crimes Protection Unit**

*Attorneys in Charge:*

Lisa Friel, *Chief*

212-335-8971

Karen Friedman-Agnifilo, *Deputy Chief*

212-335-9462

**Witness Aid Services Unit**

212-335-9040

**Northern Manhattan Office**

212-864-7884

**Hospital-based rape crisis programs:**

**Bellevue Hospital Center**

1st Avenue at 27th Street

212-562-3435

**Beth Israel Medical Center**

317 East 17th Street

212-420-4516

**Harlem Hospital**

506 Lenox Avenue

212-939-4621

**Mt. Sinai Sexual Assault Violence  
Intervention Program**

One Gustav Levy Place

(98th Street/ Madison Avenue)

212-423-2140

**New York Presbyterian Hospital  
(formerly Columbia Presbyterian)**

622 West 168th St.

212-305-9060

**New York Presbyterian Hospital  
(formerly New York Cornell)**

525 East 68th Street

212-746-4328

**St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Rape Crisis  
Intervention Program**

411 West 114th Street

212-523-4728

**St. Vincent's Medical Center**

41-51 East 11th Street

212-604-8068

**Community-based programs:**

**Ackerman Institute for the Family**

149 East 78th Street

212-879-4900 x122

**Barrier-Free Living, Inc**

212-677-6668 (voice / TDD)

**Asian Women's Center**

212-732-5230

**NYC Gay/Lesbian Anti-Violence Project**

212-714-1141

**Korean American Family Center**

212-465-0664

**National Organization for Women (NOW)  
Rape Support**

212-598-4218

Please note this resource list is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to be a recommendation of any of the specific services provided by the programs. This brochure does not list every resource available to sexual assault victims in New York City.

- Criminal cases are prosecuted by the District Attorney’s Office on behalf of the People of the State of New York. Victims are not required to obtain an attorney.
- As a crime victim, you are a witness in the prosecution of your case.
- As a witness for the State, a victim has certain responsibilities to assist with the prosecution of a criminal case. These responsibilities may include signing an affidavit and providing testimony at grand jury and at trial.
- If you receive a subpoena, you must appear in court as specified by that subpoena.
- A victim is under no obligation to speak about the facts of the case with anyone. If someone contacts you concerning the case, make sure that you ask that person to identify himself or herself.
- When you answer a question, you must tell the truth.
- If others advise you not to appear in court, or if you are threatened or harassed, immediately contact the assistant district attorney assigned to the case or the Witness Aid Services Unit at 212-335-9040.

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Docket Number

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Indictment Number

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Witness Aid Staff

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Witness Aid Staff’s Telephone Number

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Assistant District Attorney

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Assistant District Attorney’s Telephone Number

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\*NYSID Number

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Additional Information

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\* The NYSID (New York State Identification) number is necessary in order to use the VINE Program. The VINE Program is a free 24-hour hotline that provides victims with custody information and an automated release notification regarding inmates in the custody of the New York City Department of Correction and the New York State Department of Correctional Services. To access VINE, please call 1-888-846-3469 (1-888-VINE4NY) or speak to any member of the Witness Aid Services Unit staff.