



Beyond doubt:

> Telling the police about crime



**This book is from the
Victorian Equal Opportunity
and Human Rights Commission**



About this book



This book has some

- hard words
- **and**
- hard information.

You might need someone to help you understand it.

Hard words are in **blue**.

About this book

This book is about



- people with a disability

and



- crime.

This book is about **crimes against the person.**



A crime against the person is when someone

- hurts you
- scares you
- makes you feel unsafe
- tries to control you.

This book is about when a person with a disability **reports a crime**.



Report a crime means you tell the police what happened.

Where does crime happen?



A crime can happen

- where you live
- where you study
- on the street
- in a hospital
- at a service.

Who does crime happen to?

Crime can happen to anyone.

Lots of people with a disability are **victims** of crimes against the person.



Victim means someone

- hurt you
- scared you
- made you feel unsafe
- tried to control you.



In this book the victim wears a pink top.



How to report a crime

If you think a crime has happened, you can tell the police



- on the phone when you call **0 0 0**



- at the police station



- at the place where the crime happened.

Why we did this project

We wanted to know more about



- people with a disability

and



- crime.



We want people to

- know what to do when a crime happens
- report crimes to the police.



We want the police to know how to help people with a disability.



We want

- people with a disability
- and**
- people who do **not** have a disability to be treated the same by the police.

What we did



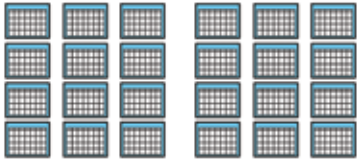
We talked to

- people with a disability who reported a crime
- police
- experts - people who know a lot about crime
- people who helped a person to report a crime. For example,
 - the person's family
 - support workers
 - **interpreters**
 - **independent third persons**
 - **advocates.**

Read about

- interpreters
- independent third persons
- advocates

on pages 19, 20 and 21.



We talked to people about crimes that happened in the last 2 years.



We read lots of information about

- people with a disability
- and**
- crime.



Some people did a survey. For example,

- people with a disability
- support workers
- family.

They answered questions about crime.

What we found out



It can be hard for a person with a disability to report a crime.



Some people with a disability are scared to report a crime.



Sometimes police do **not** understand about disability. For example, the police do **not** believe a woman is blind.



Sometimes police do **not** think something is a crime - when it is a crime. For example, when someone gets hit in a service.

Sometimes the police do **not** believe the victim.



Some police

- understood about disability
- knew how to support people with a disability
- knew how to communicate with people with a disability
- tried hard to help the victim.



Some police did **not**

- understand about disability
- know how to support people with a disability
- know how to communicate with people with a disability
- try hard to help the victim.



The police in Victoria want to know

- more about disability
- how to help people with a disability report a crime.



Why a victim might not report a crime

Maybe a victim



- does **not** know a crime has happened
- does **not** know they can complain
- does **not** know who to tell
- feels embarrassed
- does **not** want to tell the story.



Maybe a victim thinks something bad will happen. For example,

- they will be punished
- they will lose their friends
- they will be moved to another house.

Maybe the victim does **not** want friends or family to find out.



Maybe a victim thinks

- no one will believe the story
- the police will **not** believe the story.

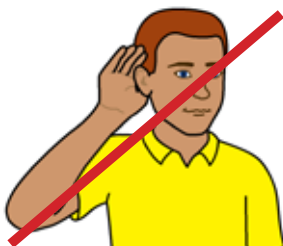


Maybe a victim does **not** report a crime because

- they had a bad experience with the police. For example, the police were **not** nice.
- they think they will get into trouble with the police. For example, if they have been in trouble with the police before.



Sometimes a family member or carer does **not** report a crime because they think it will be too hard for the victim.



Sometimes **no one** in a service listens to the victim.



Sometimes **no one** in a service believes the victim.



Sometimes the police do the wrong thing.

For example,

- the police are **not** nice
- the police do **not** listen
- the police do **not** let the victim have a support person.

The victim might **withdraw the complaint**.

This means the victim does **not** want to report the crime anymore.



Sometimes the victim is upset from telling the crime story again and again. The victim might withdraw the complaint.



Talking to the police

The police must make sure you feel safe

You can say if you want to talk to a



- policeman

or



- policewoman.



To report a sex crime

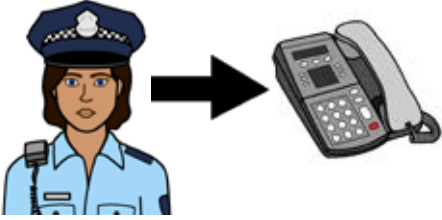


- a woman victim can talk to a policewoman

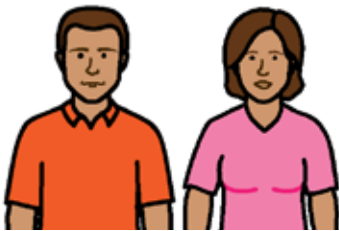


- a man victim can talk to a policeman.

The police must support you in the right way



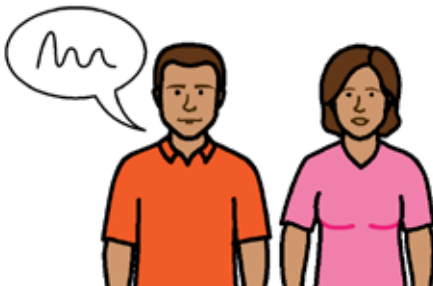
You might want a person to be with you.
You can ask the police to call someone.



You can have a **support person**.

For example,

- a friend
- a counsellor
- a support worker
- someone from your family.



You can have a **communication support person**. A communication support person helps you get your message across.



You can have an **interpreter**. An interpreter is a person who changes your message from one language to another. For example,

- Auslan to spoken English
- Vietnamese to English.



Sometimes your support person can **not** talk to the police **with** you because

- they know about the crime and they have to talk to the police alone

or

- they were the first person you told about the crime.



You can choose a different support person





You can have an **independent third person** or **ITP**. An ITP can be

- a friend
- a relative
- a volunteer from the Office of the Public Advocate.



An ITP can help you

- call
 - a lawyer
 - a support person
- get your message across
- understand police questions
- understand what is going to happen.



An ITP can **not** give you **legal advice**.

This means an ITP can **not** tell you what you should do.



You can have an **advocate**. An advocate can be

- a friend
- a relative
- a volunteer.



An advocate **can** give you **advice**.

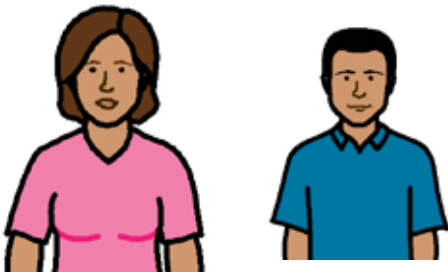
This means an advocate **can** help you decide what to do.

You can have



- a communication support person

and



- an independent third person

and



- an advocate.

The police must make sure you feel comfortable



The place where you talk to the police should

- be quiet
- have enough space
- **not** have people walking past or looking in.

The police must make sure you feel in control



Police should

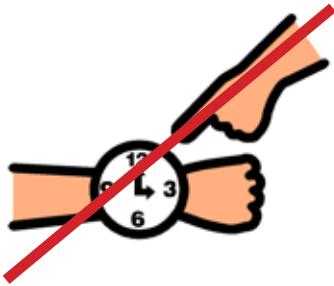
- talk to you, **not** your support person
- treat you with respect - **not** like a child
- use words you understand
- tell you **all** the information
- ask you **Do you want to keep going?**
- ask you **Do you want to take a break?**

The police must let you tell your story



The police should

- listen
- give you time to tell your story
- let you take a break
- let you communicate in a way that is good for you. For example, if you use a talking machine, they should **not** take it away.



The police should **not**

- interrupt you
- rush you.

The police must ask the right questions



Police should

- know how to talk to people with different disabilities.
- find a way to help you understand.
For example, use a picture board.
- tell you what hard words mean
For example, if a policeman says **You must give a statement.**
The policeman should also say **Give a statement means you tell us what happened.**



The police should **not** ask

- too many questions at one time
- questions that confuse you.



The investigation

Investigation means the police work out what happened.



The police will

- talk to the victim
- talk to **witnesses**. A witness is
 - a person who saw the crime
 - a person who knows about the crime
- write down information.



The investigation can take a long time.

The police should

- stay in touch with you
- tell you new information
- tell you what they are going to do next.



If the police do **not** keep in touch, you can complain.

The police will tell you



- Yes, the police will investigate what happened to you.

or



- No, the police will not investigate what happened to you.

If the police say they will **not** investigate, they **must** tell you why.



If the police do **not** tell you why, you can complain.

Going to court



If the police arrest the person who did the crime, you must go to court.

This is called a **hearing**.



At the hearing

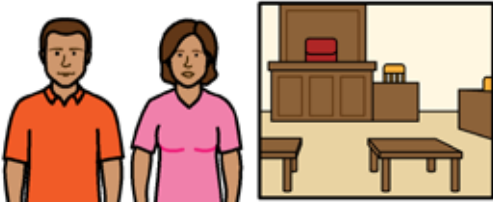
- you will talk about what happened to you
- the person who did the crime will talk about what happened.



The judge will

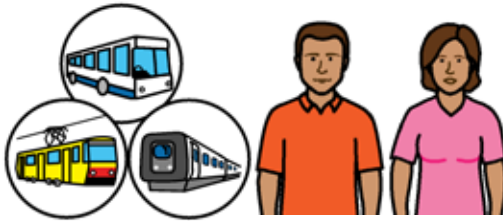
- listen
- and
- say what happens next.

Get ready for court



You might need support **before** you go to court. For example, to know

- what will happen at the hearing
- what to say at the hearing
- how the court looks.



You might need support to **go** to court.

For example,

- to get a taxi or bus
- to find a person to take you to court.

What people told us about court



Court can be hard for people with a disability.



Physical access is a problem. For example, some courts do **not** have enough space for wheelchairs.



Communication is a problem. For example, some courts

- do **not** have an Auslan interpreter for people who are deaf
- do **not** have easy read information for people who can **not** read well.



Transport is a problem. Some people can **not** get public transport to court.

How to make police services better



We want people with a disability to report crime.

We want

- police
- other services

to know how to help people with a disability.

We have ideas about this.

Victoria Police

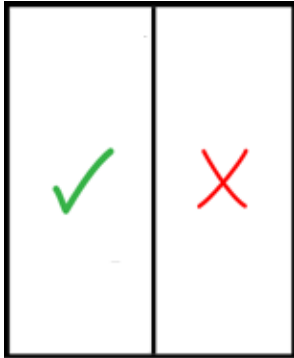


Victoria Police should do training about

- different disabilities
- how to support people with different disabilities
- how to communicate with people with a disability
- how to communicate with people who can **not** talk
- when to call an ITP.



Victoria Police should work with Scope to write police information in Easy English.



Victoria Police should write a **Code of Practice** about how to help people with a disability.

A Code of Practice is a book of rules about the best way to do a job.

Victoria Police should

- talk to people with a disability
- and**
- ask for their ideas

before they write the Code of Practice.

Victoria Police should write these ideas in their Disability Action Plan for 2014.

Going to court

Courts should have better access.

For example, courts should have



- space for wheelchairs



- hearing loops



- information in Easy English.



Judges should learn more about

- different disabilities
- how to support people with different disabilities.



Laws should make it easier for people with a disability to tell their story in court.

Working together



Agencies should learn to work together when a crime happens. For example,

- Victoria Police
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Services

should

- talk to each other
- help each other with the investigation
- make sure the victim feels safe.

New phone number



There should be a new phone number for

- police
- other agencies.

The police and other agencies can call this number to get information about different ways people communicate.



For example,

- Auslan
- talking machines
- picture boards.

People with a communication disability



The government should make sure people with a communication disability can communicate with other people.

New staff in services



New staff should learn

- about different disabilities
- about crime. For example
 - what **is** a crime
 - what is **not** a crime
- how to stop a crime
- how to report crime.

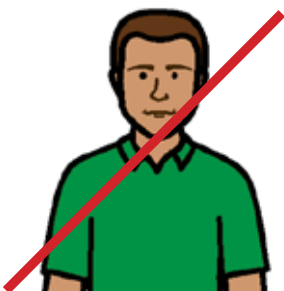


People with a disability should help train new staff.



Staff with high level skills should help new staff.

Staff who do a crime in a service



Staff or volunteers who do a crime should **not** be able to get another job with people with a disability.



The people who helped with this project

- The Commission's Disability Reference Group
- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Victoria Police
- Office of the Public Advocate
- Disability Services Commissioner
- Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with a Disability
- Department of Justice Community Operations and Victims Support Agency
- The University of Ballarat

Scope's Communication Resource Centre wrote the Easy English.

July 2014 www.scopevic.org.au

To see the original contact The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

Mayer-Johnson LLC says we can use the Picture

Communication Symbols

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