

## *What if I am the victim of a crime?*

Crime victims react to their victimization in a number of different ways. Most struggle with feelings of helplessness, guilt, fear, anger, concern, shame, and other emotions. Victims also may have physical injuries and/or suffer damages to personal property. Just as every crime is different, the response by every victim is different to some degree.

Below are some suggestions should you become the victim of a crime:

- **[Go to a safe place](#)**. The most important thing a victim can do after a violent crime is to get to a safe place. This can be any place where you feel comfortable and the suspect does not have access to you such as a locked room, friend's home, public place, etc.
- **[Seek medical attention](#)**. Violent crime victims should get medical treatment for their injuries as soon as possible. Call an ambulance, have a friend transport you, or, as a last resort, take yourself to the emergency room.
- **[Report the crime to authorities](#)**. Reporting should be done immediately for many reasons, including:
  - The quicker the crime is reported, the better chance of identifying and catching the suspect.
  - Authorities can direct you to insure you get the assistance you need.
  - Immediate reporting gives more credibility to your complaint.
- **[Preserve evidence](#)**. The basis of a criminal investigation is physical evidence. Therefore, you should do everything possible to insure nothing is destroyed or removed from the crime scene. Clothing should not be washed, resist the urge to "tidy up" things before police arrive, and in the event of a sexual crime, do not bathe, brush teeth, comb hair, or perform other personal hygiene actions. While waiting on the officer's arrival, make notes of what happened, descriptions, route of escape, etc. to refresh your memory.
- **[Seek support](#)**. Being the victim of a crime can be both mentally and physically traumatic. It is important that you seek the support of family, counselors, clergy, friends, or anyone else you feel comfortable talking to about the incident. The Horry County Police Department has two **[Victim's Advocates](#)** available to assist you.