

The Court System

For many, this may be their first involvement with law enforcement or the judicial system. It is very common for people to expect what they have seen on television or movies to apply to their current circumstances. Unfortunately, these expectations are, more than often, a distorted and unrealistic snapshot of how things truly operate. Arizona has laws and regulations in place to protect victims. For cases involving prosecution, a court advocate can provide information, education, and support that will help reduce fears and uncertainties.

Another consideration that is often practiced is that of resolution by plea agreement. By negotiation and agreement, this approach to resolution can prevent the need for testifying in court. As with any situation, education and information about how the judicial system operates can assist the victim and their family in the reduction of trauma.

Orders of Protection and Injunctions Against Harassment

If you have been or may become a victim of domestic violence, you may seek an Order of Protection or Injunction Against Harassment at any Municipal Court, Justice Court, or Supreme Court. If there are any pending legal actions for maternity, paternity, annulment, legal separation, or dissolution of marriage, the protective order must be sought through the Superior Court.

El Mirage Municipal Court
623-815-2186

Maricopa County Justice Court
602-372-2000

Maricopa County Superior Court
602-372-9400

Resource and Referral Information

RAINN

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network
1-800-656-HOPE (4673) www.rainn.org

EMPACT

480-784-1500

Crisis Hotline

602-222-9444

Community Information & Referral

211

A New Leaf (Counseling Services)

602-441-6458

Arizona Coalition to End Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

602-279-2900 www.acesdv.org/

Maricopa County Sheriff Office

Victim Notification Unit

(For Victims Only: Offender Booking and Release Information)

602-876-8276

Maricopa County Attorney's Office

Victim Compensation Bureau

301 W. Jefferson, 9th Floor

Phoenix, AZ 85003

(602) 506-4955

El Mirage Police Department

Victim Assistance Unit

12401 W Cinnabar Ave

El Mirage, AZ 85335

623-500-3090

vau@cityofelmirage.org

Surviving Sexual Assault

City of El Mirage Police Department

Victim Assistance Unit



What is Sexual Assault?

Crimes that involve forced or unwanted sexual conduct are considered to be sexual assaults and can include:

- Acquaintance Rape/Non-Stranger Rape
- Date Rape or Stranger Rape
- Drug/Alcohol Facilitated Sexual Assault
- Indecent Exposure or “Flashing”
- Forced Sodomy (Oral or Anal)
- Gang Rape/Multiple Rape
- Marital Rape or Marital Sexual Assault
- Object Penetration
- Same Sex Sexual Assault
- Sexual Battery
- Voyeurism or “Peeping Tom”

Dealing with your Feelings and Trauma:

Common short- and long- term reactions:

- Inability to concentrate or function at a usual level
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Nightmares
- Loss of self confidence
- Stress related illness
- Feelings of grief and despair
- Feelings helplessness
- Sleeplessness
- Fear of being alone, or with people, or in a specific setting, especially at night
- Anxiety and mood swings
- Feelings of guilt and shame
- Denial of the assault
- Flashbacks
- Embarrassment
- Distrust towards others

What are the stages of coping?

Victims tend to go through several stages when coping with a sexual assault. Generally denial comes first, then realization, anger, and eventually resolution of the event.

Denial Stage:

Initially, there may be denial and you may shut out others and avoid the subject. It is an attempt to believe the assault did not happen. Disbelief can be a protection from the overwhelming feelings associated with the trauma.

Realization Stage:

Denial is often followed by a realization stage where feelings begin to emerge. You may begin to lack trust in others and fear of future assaults may cause you to isolate yourself. There is also a tendency to blame yourself for the assault. It is important to remember you did the best you could in the situation. You are the victim; the blame rests on your attacker. Do not blame yourself in your attempt to make some sense out of what happened.

Anger Stage:

Victims usually move into a stage of anger. This is healthy when your feelings are directed toward your assailant. Sometimes your anger may be misdirected towards those around you. Let them know that you are not angry with them, but rather with what happened to you. The anger indicates you are beginning to integrate the event into your life and move on.

Resolution Stage:

Finally, you can begin to look ahead. You accept that it happened and that it was terrible, but you realize it is over.

Counseling and Victim Assistance

The El Mirage Victim Assistance Unit provides advocates to help you through the maze of events and feelings connected with your sexual assault. An advocate can be with you when the police question you to help answer your questions, to give you information about what to expect, and to refer you to needed services. When you need or want to talk, the advocate will listen to you, offer alternatives and help you sort out your feelings.

Medical Attention

Medical attention is important for several reasons such as collection of evidence, unnoticed injuries, possible internal injuries, risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease, becoming pregnant and risk of infection.

Forensic exams are performed by specially trained nurses and generally should be performed within 120 hours. Examinations are done in the medical suite, at a local family advocacy center.

As part of the exam, a detailed medical history is taken and used to aid in the collection of evidence and examination of injuries.

Evidence is collected from various parts of the body with the use of cotton swabs, injuries are documented and measured, blood is usually drawn for DNA and collection of clothing may be necessary. Usually an opportunity to shower and a change of clothing is provided.