

VICTIM SAFETY

TECHNIQUES

1. Use a CODE system: If you don't need help pick a number between 1 and 5. If they give you a number over 5 you know to send assistance regardless of what else they say.
2. If you ascertain that police dispatch is required and the victim will be endangered by asking them more questions tell them you don't have to say anything more, officers are on their way. Try to keep them on the phone or to at least not hang up.
3. Agree on a strategy with the caller. For instance, the caller has been assaulted and the suspect has left, but could return at any moment.
 - Tell the caller that you will pretend that you are calling from a Photo Studio to make an appointment, if the suspect picks up the phone, the Communications Professional would say, "Would it be convenient for you to come in for photographs next Thursday?"
 - OR
 - Use the pound key on the phone to alert the Communications Professional if the suspect comes on line.
4. Are you able to speak freely? If not, are you able to answer questions with a yes/no?
5. Listen for background information; if the caller indicates that everything is fine but you hear screaming, yelling, things being thrown, etc., you know the verbal information you are getting is incorrect. Background noises can provide *excited utterances* as well as auditory proof that an incident occurred.
6. As the victim if putting the suspect on the phone is a good idea. [****This could cause the suspect to become more violent towards the caller or it could divert the suspects attention.**]
If the suspect will talk to you it could allow you to calm the suspect down or keep them from committing further violence.
 - There are two sides to every story, tell me yours. Power and control dynamics come into play, the suspect may very well focus on controlling *you* and tell their story on tape.

- Putting the suspect on the phone may allow the victim to flee the scene, if at all possible have the victim tell you where they are going so the officers will know where to make contact.
7. If it is not safe for the victim to remain on the line, tell them to lay the phone down and leave the line open. This enables you to hear what is going on in the background. Additionally, the suspect may not be aware the victim has placed the call.
 8. If the victim says they were strangled, ask them if they are in need of medical aid. If you notice a raspy voice, difficulty talking or breathing, difficulty swallowing, nausea or vomiting or fainting *dispatch medical aid*.

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