

What to Expect When Testifying

One of the most common concerns from our crime victims is testifying in court. Witnesses and/or victims frequently get nervous and uneasy about having to testify in a court proceeding. The truth is that our criminal justice system sometimes requires witness and/or victim testimony. In the event you are required to testify, here are some helpful tips to put your mind at ease:

- Tell the truth.
- Dress appropriately.
- Only answer the questions.
- Stick to the facts.
- Relax and speak clearly.
- Both the Prosecutor and the Defense Attorney will ask each witness questions. The ultimate goal for both parties is to obtain the truth.
- During the Defense Attorney's questioning, he/she may ask difficult questions to test your recollection or credibility. The key is to relax and keep your composure.
- Answer all questions to the point. If you can answer a question with a simple "yes" or "no", do so. Answer only the questions asked and do not volunteer additional information. If the attorney wants that information, he will ask a question to elicit that information.
- If you do not know the answer to a question, say so.
- If you do not understand or did not hear a question, ask that it be explained or repeated.
- If either lawyer raises an objection, stop speaking at once. After the Judge has ruled, you may be asked to continue.