

From Reporting Abuse to The Trial— How to Cope, advice from a survivor

This information is from a range of self-help sheets written by survivors for survivors. The words were carefully chosen to let you and other survivors know that you're not alone, and it is possible to have a hopeful, confident future.

Reporting abuse and going through police and court proceedings caused me a huge amount of anxiety, particularly when my case went to trial. I received excellent support from an Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) at RSVP though who helped me cope and feel informed at every step of the way. My ISVA talked to the police on my behalf, supported me in court while I gave evidence and helped me to access and attend the other services I needed too.

I hope my experiences, useful tips and advice will help you to seek ISVA services and feel supported before, during and after you have reported.

- Take each day as it comes, try not to think too far ahead. There are many stages in the criminal justice process, just take one step at a time.
- Be prepared for the length of time that each stage can take. It can take many months, sometimes even longer, between reporting to the trial date.
- When you are asked questions by police and/or in court take a deep breath, say as much as you can and know that it's ok if you don't know or remember, just say that.
- Allow yourself to feel all your emotions - don't try to bottle things up.
- Turn to and talk to people you trust who can help you. Even with support be prepared that you might still feel alone sometimes, that's ok.
- Be kind to yourself and put yourself first. Taking care of yourself physically and emotionally can really help if you're feeling anxious.
- Before the trial, visit the court to familiarise yourself - your ISVA can arrange this and accompany you. During the trial be prepared for waiting around - your ISVA can wait with you.
- Try not to have set expectations of what's going to happen, it's impossible to predict the outcome. Hope for the best but prepare for the worst.

RSVP services: 0121 643 0301 Helpline: 0121 643 4136 Email: info@rsvporg.co.uk



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You don't need to deal with the effects of sexual violence, sexual assault or sexual abuse alone. RSVP are here to offer support to survivors, to enable you to live a life with hope and confidence which is free from abuse.

We offer:

- Specialist counselling for survivors and their supporters
- Independent sexual violence advocates (ISVAs) to assist you through criminal or civil proceedings or in crisis, whether you have reported or not
- Social groups and coffee mornings focussing on self-help
- Emotional support on the telephone helpline 0121 643 4136

These are some of our services. For more ways we can support you contact:-

☎ 0121 643 0301

@ info@rsvporg.co.uk

@ isva@rsvporg.co.uk

@ www.rsvporg.co.uk/services

🐦 @RSVP_West_Mids

f facebook.com/RSVPWM

📷 instagram.com/RSVPWM

You are not your abuse.
You are not what they did to you.
You are not your trauma.

You are your cleverness that survived.
You are the courage that escaped.
You are the power that protected
a tiny spark of your light.

Anonymous

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