

Information for G/L/B/T Victims and Witnesses



CYRUS R. VANCE, JR.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY





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Dear Friends,

Being a victim or witness of a crime can be a difficult experience, and this is often particularly true for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (G/L/B/T) individuals. Recognizing the potential needs and concerns, my office has an Advisor to the District Attorney for G/L/B/T Issues to assist you. As an advocate for individuals and organizations, the Advisor can provide support to you as you report crimes, seek information, or participate in the criminal justice system. I hope you find this brochure helpful, and I encourage you to avail yourself of the many resources offered by this office.

Sincerely,

Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

If I Am a Victim of a Crime, What Should I Do?

If you are the victim or witness of a crime, it is critical that you report the incident to the police department. The police respond immediately if notified, and it is vital that you cooperate with their investigation at the scene. If the incident is not immediately reported to the police, you are encouraged to file a report as soon as possible to the police precinct in which the crime occurred. If you have questions or need assistance reporting the crime, please contact the G/L/B/T Advisor, who can provide you with assistance and information.

How Do I Deal with Being a Crime Victim or Witness?

No one expects to be the victim of a crime, and therefore it can be a difficult and upsetting experience. Sometimes there is a tendency to be ashamed, depressed, or angry. Often G/L/B/T victims and witnesses feel an acute sense of isolation. Those are all very natural responses, and it is important that you recognize your feelings and seek out support for your recovery. Talk to people you feel comfortable with and who support you, and make use of the services this office offers. Part of recovering from an incident involves taking back control and setting realistic expectations. Gathering information is essential to this undertaking. The G/L/B/T Advisor is available to meet with you or to speak with you by phone.

How Can the G/L/B/T Advisor Help Me?

The G/L/B/T Advisor will help you get connected to services in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, such as free counseling and assistance with crime victim compensation funds. In addition, the G/L/B/T Advisor can refer you to community-based organizations and answer any questions you may have about court proceedings. The Advisor works closely with victims and Assistant District Attorneys, sitting in on interviews and accompanying victims to court. By working collaboratively, the District Attorney's Office and the G/L/B/T community can address the problem of crimes targeting the community and provide a victim or witness with relief and a sense of restorative justice.

How Can I Get an Order of Protection?

An order of protection can only be issued by a judge. At arraignment, an Assistant District Attorney can request that the judge grant one. An order of protection is a court order that instructs the offender to stay away from you, your home, or your place of business and to refrain from certain conduct, including harassment and intimidation. In Criminal Court, an order of protection can only be issued if the offender has been arrested and a criminal case is pending. If the offender violates the order of protection, he or she can be re-arrested.

What If I Am Uncomfortable About Going Forward with the Case?

Sometimes victims or witnesses may have legitimate concerns that make them reluctant to go forward with their case. They may fear invasion of their privacy, be concerned about missing time at work, or have travel plans. If you have concerns about going forward with a case, tell the Assistant District Attorney handling the matter, or speak to the G/L/B/T Advisor. We will work with you to reduce your concerns and provide you with the information you need.

What If I Don't Want to Tell People I've Been the Victim of a Crime?

We are aware of the desire for privacy and do not disclose any victim's or witness' name, except in a limited number of court documents. The victim's name may appear in the accusatory instrument that starts the criminal case, but home address, phone number, work place information, or other identifying information is not revealed. In cases of sexual assault, the victim's name is not disclosed or available to the public. The District Attorney's Office does not identify victims or witnesses to the press, community groups, elected officials, parents, partners, or co-workers. The privacy of victims and witnesses is respected, and information is only revealed when required by statute or the judge.

- Criminal cases are prosecuted by the District Attorney’s Office on behalf of the People of the State of New York. Victims are not required to obtain an attorney.
- As a crime victim, you are a witness in the prosecution of your case.
- As a witness for the State, a victim has certain responsibilities to assist with the prosecution of a criminal case. These responsibilities may include signing an affidavit and providing testimony at grand jury and at trial.
- If you receive a subpoena, you must appear in court as specified by that subpoena.
- A victim is under no obligation to speak about the facts of the case with anyone, including the defense and the press. If someone contacts you concerning the case, make sure that you ask that person to identify himself or herself.
- When meeting with an Assistant District Attorney, it is important that you answer questions truthfully and accurately. If you have a concern about the question being asked or about your answer, you should share those concerns with the Assistant District Attorney or with the Advisor. When you answer a question under oath, you are obligated to tell the truth.
- If others advise you not to appear in court, or if you are threatened or harassed, immediately contact the Assistant District Attorney assigned to the case, or call the Witness Aid Services Unit at 212-335-9040. In an emergency, call 911.

Precinct / Detective

Precinct / Detective Phone Number

Assistant District Attorney

Assistant District Attorney’s Telephone Number

Docket Number

G/L/B/T Advisor (212-335-9291)

Location, Time, and Date of Next Meeting
or Court Date

New York County District Attorney's Office

New York County District Attorney's Office

One Hogan Place

New York, NY 10013

212-335-9000 (main number)

212-335-9500 (TTY)

<http://www.manhattanda.org>

**Advisor to the District Attorney for
G/L/B/T Issues**

80 Centre Street, Room 864

New York, NY 10013

212-335-9291

Witness Aid Services Unit

100 Centre Street, Room 231

New York, NY 10013

212-335-9040

New York City Police Department

NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force

One Police Plaza

New York, NY 10038

646-610-5267

G/L/B/T Community Liaison

Office of the Police Commissioner

One Police Plaza, Room 308

New York, NY 10038

646-610-6017

Community-Based Programs

NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project

240 West 35th Street, Suite 200

New York, NY 10001

212-714-1141 (24-hour hotline)

212-714-1134 (TTY)