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**I was a crime victim – what do I do?
How to File a Police Report without Causing Further Victimization**

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I am in the community frequently talking about the subject I know best: victimization. I was shocked to hear a participant at one presentation say: *“If you report a crime in my neighborhood, you carry the label of a snitch. You are ‘hot’ (and not in a good way); you become a target.”* By the end of my presentation – which at that point became a negotiation about how to report crimes safely without causing further harm – the audience came to the realization that getting the appropriate services to a crime victim far outweighs an unwarranted stigmatization.

Reporting your crime is necessary in order to get services. These services in no way will take away the impact of the crime, but you may receive resources to assist with transitioning from victim to survivor.

Victims often assume they need to call the police to their home in order to file a police report. In actuality, the victim can go to the police precinct in their community to file their report. The police report serves as documentation to prove that the crime actually occurred. The type of victimization, the identified victim, and other relevant information are included in the police report. You may not walk away with a hard copy of your police report, but make sure to receive the following: police report number, police officer’s name, police officer’s badge number, date of report, police precinct, and the date your report will be available.

Victims also assume if they do not have the perpetrators name; a police report cannot be filed. Even if the perpetrator's name is not known, a police report can be filed by providing as much information as possible (i.e., the date, time, place, and type of crime). In my presentations, I often compare filing a police report to going to the doctor after a fender bender. Follow up. You never know what the future holds and to what extent your paper trail will be needed.