

# Mount Holyoke College

## Department of Public Safety

### Victim / Witness Assistance Program

Crime of any type committed against or witnessed by someone can be traumatic. Only the victim or witness can understand how deeply a crime affects them.

On this campus, we are fortunate that we have had very few serious crimes over the years. However, even crimes such as thefts and annoying telephone calls can be disturbing for victims of these crimes.

We have created this section to aid victims in finding resources to help them understand that they are not alone, they have rights, and to provide some information about the legal process in Massachusetts.

If anyone is the victim of or witnesses a crime, please immediately contact Public Safety at x2304 or 1-911 for emergencies. National statistics provide a foundation for a common sense theory: the sooner authorities are alerted to a crime, the more likely it is that the perpetrator can be apprehended and prosecuted.

The Mount Holyoke College Department of Public Safety provides a high level of support to victims of crimes who are members of our community. Whether a crime occurred on campus or not, the Department works with students, faculty and staff members whose crime affects their life on our campus. The Victim/Witness Assistance program includes, but is not limited to:

- Safety planning for victims of domestic violence, regardless of where the violence took place

- Referrals and resources for victims of sexual assault
- Liaison with other investigative agencies for cross-jurisdictional investigations
- Assistance in identifying ways to reduce the impact of crime on victims
- Assistance navigating the court process, and transportation assistance when appropriate
- Liaison with other agencies and campus departments to provide resources to aid victims in regaining normalcy in their lives
- Educational and crime prevention programming

### Crisis Response

The Department works with other agencies and college departments to aid victims of crime or tragedy, suffering severe stress and trauma, particularly where there is no family or friends support base available. Some examples whereby Victim Services may be used are:

Homicides, suicide, sudden deaths, armed robberies, commercial/financial robberies, sudden infant deaths, sexual assault, domestic violence.

### Liaison

The primary agency with whom the Department works in supporting victims of crimes is the Victim/Witness Advocate working out of the Northwestern District Attorney's office. These advocates aid victims throughout court processes and make referrals to other agencies as needed to provide the maximum support to victims.

### Personal Support

Support is coordinated with other agencies and departments on campus through personal home

visits, home security checks, and telephone contact. Telephone contact is made with the victim, offering assistance and support through a home visit and/or a home security check. Crime prevention techniques and programs are explained and information packages are provided, focusing on prevention of further victimization and proactive community involvement.

### Follow-Up Assistance

Victims who have additional information regarding their cases contact a Public Safety officer, who then records the information on appropriate departmental forms and forwards this information to the appropriate investigator. Additional stolen property and information on possible suspects are common types of follow-up information the Department provides.

### Victim Information

The department acts as a focal point to the Justice System and upon request, provides information to victims regarding the status of stolen property, the status of their case, court proceeding and court dispositions.

### Referrals

Victims are referred to appropriate community and government agencies for additional or long term support and assistance.

### Court Preparation/Accompaniment

Court preparation and/or accompaniment is another service offered by Victim Services in preparing and taking a victim through the court process. Child victims of sexual abuse or child abuse are also provided in advance and are taken through the "Child Witness Court Preparation program".

### Trauma Debriefings/Defusing

Following a traumatic event, the Department works in conjunction with Mental Health staff and Deans' staff to coordinate debriefings or immediate defusing of the event. Examples may include: disasters, armed robberies, industrial accidents, and shootings.

### **Community Presentations**

Proactive or reactive approaches and possible reactions and coping skills are presented to members of the community about response to and prevention of various crimes. Topics are varied and include self defense workshops, drug and alcohol awareness, Streetwise and Safe, sexual assault, motor vehicle safety, fire safety. Other topics can be requested as well through the Crime Prevention unit by contacting Sergeant Eddie Leverett at x2304.

### **Other Department Resources**

Trespassing Information Sheet: When can Public Safety trespass someone from the campus? How is this requested? Review this pamphlet to find out.  
[http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/dps/victim\\_witness/trespass.shtml](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/dps/victim_witness/trespass.shtml)

Domestic Violence Resource Guide: What is domestic violence? Am I a victim? What should I do if I suspect a friend is experiencing domestic violence? Check out this pamphlet for information about domestic violence.  
[http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/dps/victim\\_witness/domviol.shtml](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/dps/victim_witness/domviol.shtml)

Sexual Assault Resource Guide: What can Public Safety do for me? Who else can help me? What will happen if I press charges? Read this publication to learn more about sexual assault and what you can do.  
[http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/dps/victim\\_witness/sexlasst.shtml](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/dps/victim_witness/sexlasst.shtml)

### **Online Resources**

#### **Massachusetts Victim Bill of Rights**

<http://www.state.ma.us/mova/pdfs/VicBillRig.pdf>

#### **Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance**

<http://www.state.ma.us/mova/>

#### **SAFEPLAN Domestic Violence Resources**

<http://www.state.ma.us/mova/page85.html>

#### **National Center for Victims of Crimes**

<http://www.ncvs.org/>

#### **National Domestic Violence Hotline**

<http://www.ndvh.org/>

#### **Safe Passage Domestic Violence Resource**

<http://www.safepass.org/>

#### **Jane Doe, Inc.**

<http://www.janedoe.org/>

Provides resources to end domestic violence and sexual assault.

### **Local Resources**

#### **Five College Sexual Assault Prevention and Intervention Committee**

<http://www.fivecolleges.edu/sapic/>

Everywoman's Center, University of Massachusetts <http://www.umass.edu/ewc/>

**Massachusetts District Attorneys Association**: provides services to the Commonwealth including:

<http://www.state.ma.us/mdaa/groups/index.html>

- Attorney General's Elder Protection Advisory Committee
- Child Abuse Prosecution Subgroup
- Civil Rights Prosecutors Working Group
- Commonwealth Appellate Attorneys Action Project (CAAAP)
- Domestic Violence Subgroup
- High Tech and Computer Crime Working Group
- Juvenile Prosecutors Subgroup
- Legislative Subgroup
- Post-Conviction DNA Working Group
- Sexually Dangerous Persons (SDP) Subgroup