

## **Victim-Centered Approach**

The Sex Offense Unit adopts a victim-centered approach to investigations of sexual assault. This includes:

- Prioritizing the safety, privacy and well-being of the victim.
- Developing and providing training so that detectives are adequately prepared in responding to victims.
- Recognizing that victims are never responsible for the crimes committed against them and that offenders are always responsible for their crimes.
- Understanding the impact of victim trauma and how it affects victim behavior.
- Limiting the number of times a victim has to talk about the assault. Before the detailed investigative interview is conducted, first-responding officers and detectives should ask only the minimum number of questions to determine the nature of the allegation, provide medical treatment, and secure any evidence, witnesses, and suspects.
- Acknowledging and respecting victims' input into the criminal justice response.
- Maintaining victims' privacy and confidentiality.
- Ensuring victims are kept up-to-date at every step in the criminal justice process.

Detectives who adopt a victim-centered approach respond with sensitivity and professionalism to all victims, irrespective of their sexual orientation, socio-economic status, sexual behavior, substance abuse, mental and physical challenges, or English fluency. Detectives treat each victim with consideration, professionalism, and compassion, and they leave their personal values, morals, and opinions at the door.