



# WHAT HAPPENS AT A WOMEN AND CHILD PROTECTION UNIT?

By Naana Lorbeer

(MGCEW) and the Ministry of Safety and Security (MSS) have set up 7 Women and Child Protection Units (WACPU) all over the country.

In the event that you, or someone you know is sexually or physically abused here is a small guided process of what happens at a WACPU:

The first step to getting help and facilitating the arrest and charging of the perpetrator by reporting the assault to the nearest police station or WACPU. If you report a rape at a police station, the police officers will refer you to a WACPU and offer you assistance in getting there. They are open 24 hours a day, and therefore crimes can be reported at anytime.

Whether at a WACPU or police station, after you file a complaint, a case is opened. Make sure that you receive the case number and the name of the officer handling your case.

*The WACPU will also provide a medical examination and they can give you a Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) which is medication which greatly reduces your chances of contracting HIV and sexually transmitted diseases as a result of the rape. You will also be given medication that prevents you from getting pregnant as a result of the rape.*

Namibia has some of the highest number of reported rapes in the world. Rape, along with any other kind of abuse, and gender based violence are a sad reality for many women, girls and children in Namibia. There are many reasons why many rapes and other kinds of abuses go unreported. Fear, threats, emotional trauma and lack of knowledge or information are some reasons that some women and children stay silent. To help people report such sensitive abuses, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

Take along a trusted friend or family member to support you through this process. Rape is an extremely **traumatic** experience and you might be in a state of shock, and you will need someone that you trust to give you support and encouragement.

At the WACPU, a rape kit will be collected in cases of rape, and sent for testing. It is very important to retain the **evidence** of the rape or assault. This enables the police to collect samples that can be used to trace the perpetrator, and be used in court to prove that the crime was committed by a particular person. To allow for the proper collection of samples, please do the following:

- Do not wash yourself. This is extremely difficult not to do because that's the first instinct and feeling that one gets after such a traumatic experience. But washing yourself also washes away vital evidence that can be used to convict the rapist
- Do not change the clothes you were wearing when the rape occurred
- Do not tidy up the place where the rape or attempted rape happened
- Wrap any evidence in paper not in a plastic bag

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The WACPU provides short term counseling, after which you will be referred to a Social Worker at the MGCEW. When the reported case is opened and you do not feel confident enough to appear before the court, you can contact the social workers at the WACPU and they can provide help and arrange for someone to assist you in court.

If you need further counseling after such a traumatic experience, contact social workers at the MGCEW and they can refer you to other organisations like the Peace Center or Lifeline/ Childline. In Windhoek and two other WACPU, there is a Child Witness Support Officer who assists children in court cases as they are often intimidated at a court setting.

The WACPU in Windhoek can be found next to the Katutura State Hospital, telephone number 061 2095375. All thirteen Regions in Namibia are equipped with WACPU and any police station can provide you with the contact details of the nearest WACPU.

**GLOSSARY**

**PERPETRATOR:** The person responsible for committing a crime. In this case, the perpetrator is the rapist or the person that physically abused someone else.

**ASSAULT:** This is a physical attack on someone  
Traumatic- a shocking, hurtful or deeply disturbing experience

**EVIDENCE:** This is proof that is gathered at the scene of the crime

**FAST FACTS**

**GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**6 hours** The amount of time that elapses before a South African woman is murdered by an intimate partner

**26 Seconds** The time that elapses before another woman is raped in South Africa

**40%** The number of women in South Africa who say that their first sexual experience is forced

**63,603** The number of 'contact crime sexual offences' reported to the South African Police between 2010-2011.

**64%** The number of rapes reported that occurred either at or near home.

Source: *Doctors without borders and unicef.org/southafrica*