**Do’s and Don’ts of Interviewing a Sexual Assault Victim**

1. Establish rapport with the victim. Tell the victim your name and ask how you can help. Put him or her at ease by being as reassuring as possible.
2. Be careful not to use blaming language, even “Why” questions can leave the impression of blame. “Shoulds” and “Oughts” are best avoided.
3. Do not make it standard practice to warn the victim about the penalties for making a false charge, unless you do that for every type of crime report.
4. Be professional yet compassionate in your questioning. Try to explain why you need certain details. Let the victim tell you what happened in his or her own words.
5. Show concern for the victim, as well as the integrity of the evidence (i.e. getting an exam, not showering, drinking, etc.)
6. Be as honest and forthcoming as possible about what the victim can expect during the investigation.
7. Watch your tone of voice. Sarcasm is never appropriate in this situation. Use humor with extreme caution.
8. Give the victim plenty of time to get comfortable with you. Do not rush the interview.
9. Supply options and referrals to the victim, even if you think the case is shaky. This validates your concern for the victim and makes him or her a little less disillusioned with the system.
10. Avoid writing a personal opinion in your written report.