

# HANDBOOK

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## GOOD PRACTICES FOR THE RECEPTION OF VICTIMS OF CRIME

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Portuguese Victim Support Association  
at World Youth Day 2023



# INDEX

- Introduction . . . . . 3**
- Prevention and practical tips for safety advice . . . . . 4**
- Helping a victim of crime. . . . . 5**
  - What to do . . . . . 5
  - What NOT to do . . . . . 6
- Risk factors in large scale events. . . . . 6**
- Consequences for victims . . . . . 7**
- Useful resources and contacts . . . . . 9**
- Procedures' flowchart . . . . . 10**

# INTRODUCTION

World Youth Day (WYD) Lisbon 2023 is going to be a large-scale event, entailing a large flow of visitors coming from all parts of Portugal and the world. This is an event which is much expected, and, following its previous editions, it is supposed to be a joyful and secure experience. That being said, in addition to all the efforts and early work developed by WYD Lisbon 2023 Foundation, a protocol of cooperation was signed between this Foundation and the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV).

This was an innovative step in the history of large-scale events, since for the first time ever, a concerted, victim-centred action is being planned, based on the pillars of prevention, training of volunteers and collaborators, and provision of specialized support services.



In order to ensure this preparation and training of all of those who work in this event, this **Handbook of Good Practices** was created - so as to provide everyone with the tools to prevent situations of crime and violence and, eventually, to be prepared to deal with them if they happen to occur.



# PREVENTION AND PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SAFETY ADVICE

**It is important to reinforce that crime and violence are never the victims' fault!**

However, it is possible to take some preventive measures as a way of avoiding risks, as well as advising WYD's visitors to take them, such as:

- Bring as few valuables as possible
- Do not keep valuables in pockets
- Always opt for suitcases or backpacks with zippers
- Keep valuables close and where they can be seen (eye contact)
- While on the street, travel with the bag or backpack on the opposite side of the road
- When moving around, avoid crowded and poorly lit areas
- When withdrawing money, opt for ATMs in safe, guarded and crowded places and, preferably, do it accompanied by a trusted person
- When withdrawing cash, save it immediately afterwards
- If possible, opt for electronic payments
- In case that someone tries to steal from you, keep calm and do not offer resistance. Try to memorize as many elements as possible so as to identify that person and try to draw the attention of others around you, for example by shouting "FIRE!"
- Avoid using headphones or cell phone while moving around: these can be distracting elements towards the surroundings
- If you have legal age to consume alcoholic beverages, always do so safely and in moderation.



# HELPING A VICTIM OF CRIME

The reaction or reactions of the first person(s) to whom the victim asks for help or to whom the victim turns may be a determining factor to what follows, in what comes to the victim's well-being and how she or he overcomes the situation of victimization (Ko, S., et al, 2008; Symonds, 2010; Barkworth & Murphy, 2016).

Therefore, it is important that everyone feels prepared and know how to deal with a victimization situation.

It is crucial to take into consideration that the consequences of crime and violence do not affect the victim only – their family and friends, the witnesses and “first-responders” on the situation (this means the group of people that are the first to contact with the crime scene, such as firefighters, police officers, among others), and also the community in general, may be affected too (*Dinisman & Moroz, 2017*).



Figure 1 – Waves of Impact

Considering all this, we identify a set of strategies that should be followed in order to promote a better communication and relationship in an eventual contact with a victim of crime, and avoid secondary victimization (the type of victimization that stems not from the crime itself, but from the negative impact caused by the response of institutions and individuals to the victim) (*Council of Europe, 2006*).

## What to do:

(*Winkel, 1991; Bradford, 2011; Barkworth & Murphy, 2014*)

- **Pay attention:** it is important to make eye contact, while maintaining a relaxed but attentive posture. It is also important to be careful with verbal and non-verbal speech;
- **Listen attentively,** avoiding interruptions and demonstrating that one is listening attentively (nodding affirmatively, rephrasing);
- **Encourage the expression of emotions/feelings,** explaining and validating the interlocutor's feelings, thoughts and perspectives so that they feel understood;
- **Create empathy / convey trust,** avoiding to react too emotionally or too distantly: staying calm and demonstrate availability to help.



## What NOT to do:

(Winkel, 1991; Bradford, 2011; Barkworth & Murphy, 2014)

- **Blame the victim and/or make value judgments** about the situation experienced;
- **Ask too many questions or questions too intrusive:** whenever a victim asks for help, they don't want to be questioned, on the contrary, they want to be heard. Asking questions may push the victim away or miss-influence their next steps;
- **Question “why?”:** these kind of questions may turn the victim “defensive”, avoiding interaction with those who could help her.



Additionally, it is important to emphasize that, for safety reasons, **if a violent situation is in progress, it is important to call the presence of a police authority immediately (from nearby or via a call to 112).**

In case this happens, the goal is to transmit as many elements as possible in the most concise way. To do this in the best possible way, try to answer the following questions:

Who?	Where?
What is happening / What happened?	

In situations involving any form of physical violence, the victim should preserve the clothes they are wearing and refrain from taking a shower until they are examined at an Emergency Department of a Public Hospital. This is particularly important if the violence occurred within the past 72 hours, as it allows for the collection of potential evidence on the victim's body or clothing, as well as prompt action to prevent future health issues (prophylaxis).

## RISK FACTORS IN LARGE SCALE EVENTS

When considering large scale events, it is advisable to ponder a set of characteristics and factors that may eventually lead to risky situations, such as (Buckinghamshire New University, 2010; Raineri, 2016):

- High concentration of people;
- Within a more or less limited territorial space;
- High prospect of movement and circulation of people;
- Associated physiological stress (e.g. due to heat);
- Anxiety towards an event which is much desired.



That being said, it is recommended to know beforehand what are the types of crime that are more frequently associated with large scale events.

### **Crimes against Property**

These include those acts with the aim of appropriating property belonging to another without their consent; or to damage property of others (e.g. theft and robbery).

These crimes may occur with or without violence, threat or intimidation. Property crimes also include cases such as swindles, which occur when someone tries to obtain for themselves or third unlawful enrichment, through error, mistake or a deception about a fact that they purposely caused.

### **Crimes against the physical integrity and against life**

These include, essentially, cases of physical violence, which may range from minor disagreements/altercations to severe and life-threatening experiences.

### **Discrimination and hate crimes**

These include all those crimes motivated by the victims' real or perceived connection or association with a particular group, namely due to their race, skin colour, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin or religion.

### **Sexual Crimes**

These crimes occur whenever someone attempts or commits an unwanted approach or touch of an intimate nature on another person or group of persons.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR VICTIMS**

It is important to emphasize that the reactions of victims to what they went through may vary substantially from person to person.

Moreover, we highlight that **there is not a “correct” or “incorrect” way of reacting to violence.**

Those factors that may influence the way a victim of crime reacts to their victimization are: (Green & Pemberton, 2018; Barkworth & Murphy, 2016):

- The type of violence that was used;
- One's personal experiences;
- The age of the victim and the circumstances that may determine some kind of vulnerability (e.g. having a disability);
- The support from family and friends;
- The support from institutions and authorities contacted due to the criminal or violent experience suffered.

Victims of crime may experience different consequences, such as those listed below (Shapland & Hall, 2007; Dinisman & Moroz, 2017).




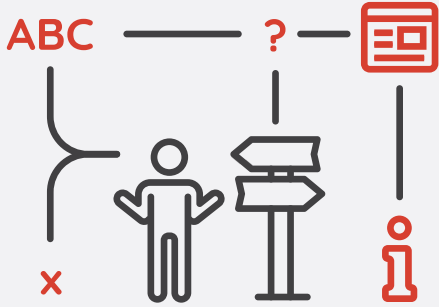
<p><b>Physical Impact</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical injuries (varying in severity)</li> <li>• Changes in eating patterns</li> <li>• Chest pain</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Digestive problems</li> </ul>
<p><b>Psychological and Emotional Impact</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apathy</li> <li>• Intense crying</li> <li>• Abrupt mood swings</li> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Intrusive thoughts</li> <li>• Avoidance of places/contexts</li> <li>• Social isolation</li> <li>• Concentration difficulties</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Feelings of guilt</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Impact</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Documents</li> <li>• Loss of cards</li> <li>• Loss of money</li> <li>• Inability to work/ Income decrease</li> </ul>

Table 1 - Consequences of violence

If the victim is a tourist or non-resident person, this impact may increase, due to (Cohen, 1987):

- The presence of a language barrier;
- Lack of knowledge about how the justice system works, as well as the support services available;
- Short-term return to country of origin, which may render it difficult to follow a personal process from a distance.





# USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

During World Youth Day Lisbon 2023, APAV will provide face-to-face support and also online, by phone and email support. Information about these services can be accessed at any time on [apav.pt/jmj](https://apav.pt/jmj).

Our **face-to-face support** will be provided in these places at the WYD:



## Colina do Encontro | Parque Eduardo VII

Near the Marquês de Pombal

July 26th to July 30th: 10am-6pm

July 31st to August 4th: 8am-12am

August 5th and August 6th: 10am-6pm



## Campo da Graça | Parque Tejo-Trancão

Sector A and Sector D

August 5th: 8am-12am

August 6th: 12am-6pm

APAV will also have its Victim Support Helpline - **116 006** - which is free of charge, available 24/7 from July 26th to August 7th.

You can also contact us via email at [jmj@apav.pt](mailto:jmj@apav.pt).

All this information will be permanently available at [apav.pt/jmj](https://apav.pt/jmj).



Other useful contacts:

European  
Emergency Number  
(Police and Medical):

**112**



Judiciary Police  
(Lisbon and Vale  
do Tejo Directorate):

**211 967 000**



Health Line

**808 24 24 24**



**SNS 24**

National Social  
Emergency Line

**144**



You can find more information on this topic at:

[apav.pt](https://apav.pt)

[infovitimas.pt](https://infovitimas.pt)

# PROCEDURES' FLOWCHART





**APAV<sup>®</sup>**



Victim Support

[apav.pt/jmj](https://apav.pt/jmj)

FREE CALL

**116 006**

VICTIM SUPPORT HELPLINE

**JULY 26<sup>TH</sup> TO AUGUST 07<sup>TH</sup>  
24 HOURS A DAY**