A picture containing text

Description automatically generatedVictim Support Service SA Companions Guide

{%p if (VSScategories == 'Interstate') %}

## Interstate Jurisdictions - Victim Assistance Services

**New South Wales Victims Service**

**Website:** [https://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](https://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au/)

**Victims Access Line**  
The Victims Access Line is the single entry point for victims of crime in NSW to access services.

**Victims Access Line:** [1800 633 063](tel:1800%20633%20063)  
**Aboriginal Contact Line:** [1800 019 123](tel:1800%20019%20123)

**Business hours:** 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)

**Email:**  
Victim Services email: [vs@dcj.nsw.gov.au](mailto:vs@dcj.nsw.gov.au)  
FFMPU email: [ffmpu@dcj.nsw.gov.au](https://docassemble.flinders.edu.au/ffmpu@dcj.nsw.gov.au)

**ACT Victims Services**

**website :** [https://www.victimsupport.act.gov.au](https://www.victimsupport.act.gov.au/)

**Phone:** [1800 8222 72](tel:1800%208222%2072) or [(02) 6205 2066](tel:(02)%206205%202066)

**Fax:** [02 6205 0177](tel:02%206205%200177)

**Address:** Level 1, 5 Constitution Avenue Canberra City.

**Victoria Victims Services**

**Website:** [https://www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au](https://docassemble.flinders.edu.au/%5bhttps:/www.victimsofcrime.vic.gov.au%5d)  
**Victims of Crime Helpline**  
The Victim of Crime Helpline can assist you to:

* get advice about reporting a crime
* find other services that can help you
* get information about the court process
* get help applying for compensation and financial assistance.

**Opening Hours:** 8am–11pm, 7 days a week  
**Call:** [1800 819 817](tel:1800%20819%20817)  
**Text:** [0427 767 891](tel:0427%20767%20891)  
**Email:** [vsa@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:vsa@justice.vic.gov.au)

**Tasmania Victim Services**

**Website:** <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/victims/services/victimsofcrime>

**Hobart**

**Address:** Level 1, 54 Victoria Street, Hobart

**Telephone:** (03) 6165 7524 or 1300 663 773 (toll free)  
**Fax:** (03) 6173 0215  
**Email:** victims@justice.tas.gov.au

**Launceston**

**Address:** Level 3, Henty House, 1 Civic Square, Launceston

**Telephone:** [(03) 6165 7524](tel:(03)%206165%207524) or [1300 663 773](tel:1300%20663%20773) (toll free)  
**Fax:** [(03) 6173 0215](tel:(03)%206173%200215)

**Burnie**

**Address:** Level 1 54 -56 Mount Street Burnie TAS 7320

**Telephone:** [(03) 6477 7133](tel:(03)%206477%207133) or [1300 663 773](tel:1300%20663%20773) (toll free)  
**Fax:** [(03) 6173 0215](tel:(03)%206173%200215)5

**Western Australia Victims Services**

**Website:** [https://www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au](https://www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au/)

**Commissioner for Victims of Crime**

**Address:** GPO Box F317 PERTH WA 6841

**Phone:** [(08) 9264 1600](tel:(08)%209264%201600) or [(08) 9425 2973](tel:(08)%209425%202973)  
**Email:** [cvoc@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:cvoc@justice.wa.gov.au)

**Criminal Injuries Compensation**

**Address:** Level 10, 32 St Georges Terrace PERTH WA 6000

**Phone:** [(08) 9425 3250](tel:(08)%209425%203250)  
**Email:** [criminal.injuries@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:criminal.injuries@justice.wa.gov.au)

**Victim Notification Registry**

**Address:** GPO Box 6702 PERTH WA 6892

**Phone:** [(08) 9425 2870](tel:(08)%209425%202870)  
**Fax:** [(08) 9425 2869](tel:(08)%209425%202869)  
**Freecall:** [1800 818 988](tel:1800%20818%20988) (outside metro only)  
**Email:** [vnr@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:vnr@justice.wa.gov.au)

**Victim Support and Child Witness Service**

**Address:** District Court Building, Level 2, 500 Hay Street PERTH WA 6000

**Phone:** [(08) 9425 2850](tel:(08)%209425%202850)  
**Fax:** [(08) 9425 4428](tel:(08)%209425%204428)  
**Freecall:** [1800 818 988](tel:1800%20818%20988)  
**Email:** [vss@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:vss@justice.wa.gov.au)

**Northern Territory Victim Services**

**Website:** [https://victimsofcrime.org.au](https://victimsofcrime.org.au/)

**For 24-hour support, contact:** [1800 672 242](tel:1800%20672%20242)

**Darwin**

**Address:** Level 2, NAB House, 71 Smith Street, Darwin NT 0800

**Phone:** [(08) 8941 0995](tel:(08)%208941%200995)  
**Email:** [admin@victimsofcrime.org.au](mailto:admin@victimsofcrime.org.au)

**Alice Springs**

**Address:** 4/15 Leichhardt Terrace, Alice Springs NT 0870

**Phone:** [(08) 8952 4466](tel:(08)%208952%204466)  
**Email:** [as.office@victimsofcrime.org.au](https://docassemble.flinders.edu.au/as.office@victimsofcrime.org.au)

**Tennant Creek**

**Address:** Paterson Street Hub, 139 Paterson Street, Tennant Creek NT 0860

**Phone:** [(08) 8952 4466](tel:(08)%208952%204466)  
**Email:** [supporttc@victimsofcrime.org.au](mailto:supporttc@victimsofcrime.org.au)

**Queensland Victim Services**

**Website:** <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/victims-and-witnesses-of-crime>

**Victim Assist**

**Phone:** [1300 546 587](tel:1300%20546%20587)  
**Email:** [victimassist@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:victimassist@justice.qld.gov.au)

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'about\_us')%}

## About us

In 2021 the Victim Support Service (VSS) celebrated 40 years of providing continuous service and support to victims of crime in South Australia. The core service provided during all of that time has been the Court Companion program that is delivered by trained and experienced volunteers.

The Court Companion program began in 1981 after retired Queensland Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod identified that victims of crime lacked support when attending court to give evidence during a criminal trial. Following a talk delivered by Mr Whitrod and his wife Mavis to the SA Dental Wives, those present volunteered to provide that missing support by accompanying victims of crime to court. Over time the Court Companion Service expanded to include victims in metropolitan, regional and rural areas of South Australia.

The Court Support Program in 2021 is now delivered in partnership with Victims of Crime SA (VOC SA), the office of the Commissioner for Victims’ Rights,. The program continues to provide support and information to victims of crime who are attending Court to give evidence in support of the crime alleged to have been committed against them. A VSS volunteer will provide support and information to the victim as well as accompany them throughout the trial process.

VSS are independently funded through the philanthropic support of individuals and business organisations within South Australia.

## Contact us

**Call:** [1800 842 846](tel:1800%20842%20846)

**Email us:**

Staying Home Staying Safe: [shss@victimsa.org](mailto:shss@victimsa.org)

Redress Support Services: [rss@victimsa.org](https://docassemble.flinders.edu.au/rss@victimsa.org)

General Enquiries: [enquiries@victimsa.org](https://docassemble.flinders.edu.au/enquiries@victimsa.org)

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'vis') %}

## Victim Impact Statements

When a defendant pleads guilty or is found guilty of committing a crime, the victim of the crime has a right to tell the court how the crime has affected them. This is done through a victim impact statement. A victim impact statement is not compulsory; however, it allows the victim/witness to have their say and to share the impact of the crime on their lives in the court. Many victims of crime welcome the opportunity to detail this with the magistrate or judge.

The statement may include:

##### **Emotional Impacts:**

* general feelings of wellbeing or enjoyment of life
* how the crime has affected any relationships (with partners, family, friends or co-workers)
* any emotions or feelings related to the crime
* effects on lifestyle and activities (such as trouble sleeping, eating, working)
* psychological effects of the crime, including any treatment required (such as depression, anxiety, stress)

##### **Physical Impacts:**

* injuries as a result of the crime (such as broken bones, nerve damage)
* how injuries have affected their life (such as work, sport or leisure activities)
* any long term impacts of injuries on their life
* any medical treatment required including future or ongoing medical treatment.

##### **Financial Impacts:**

* loss of earnings because of the crime (if a physical or psychological injury has affected your ability to work)
* general expenses caused by the crime (such as home security, replacing items)
* travel expenses because of the crime (such as court appearances)
* medical treatment needed because of the crime (such as ongoing treatment for a recurring injury the crime caused).

##### **Social Impact:**

They might describe problems the crime has caused in their daily life, including how the crime has affected:

* work or study commitments
* family or social life (friendships, social events, sporting commitments)
* how safe they feel.

The statement should not include:

* Details of the crime itself the victim’s opinion of the defendant or any information about any other crimes they believe, or know, the defendant to have been involved in or accused of
* Any information that is not factually correct. (For example, any medical diagnosis needs to be supported by documents from the victim’s doctor)
* Any offensive or inappropriate language. (It should be written in simple, descriptive words.)

How does the witness make the victim impact statement?

* The prosecutor can speak to the court on behalf of the victim.
* The prosecutor can call the victim to share their verbal statement with the court.
* The victim can make a written victim impact statement which may be handed to the judge. The victim may then have a chance to read this out to the court.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'psych\_services') %}

## Psychological Services

#### Rebuild - Relationships Australia South Australia

Provides trauma-based counselling and peer support to adult and child victims of crime as they move through the criminal justice process.

**Phone:** [1800 310 310](tel:1800%20310%20310)  
**Email:** [rebuild@rasa.org.au](mailto:rebuild@rasa.org.au)

If you find it difficult to hear or speak, you can contact RASA through the National Relay Service (NRS) on 133 677.

If you require support in another language, you can use the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) free of charge by:

* Calling RASA and asking for an interpreter, or
* Calling TIS on [131 450](tel:131%20450) and asking to be connected on [1800 577 571](tel:1800%20577%20571)

#### Domestic Violence Crisis Line

The Domestic Violence Crisis Line offers help by:

* developing safety management strategies that suit your unique situation
* linking you with tools that promote safety and technology security
* facilitating access for you and your children to safe accommodation
* providing domestic and family violence counselling over the phone
* providing information and referrals to accommodation, police, legal, housing, specialised counselling and financial supports available
* supporting you to remain safe at home.

**Phone:** [1800 800 098](tel:1800%20800%20098)

Due to the volume of calls the crisis line receives, leave a message rather than stay on hold. A specialist counsellor will return your call at a safe time nominated by you.

#### Lifeline

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

**Phone:** [13 11 14](tel:13%2011%2014)  
If you find it hard to talk, you can also text [0477 13 11 14](tel:0477%2013%2011%2014)  
Lifeline Text is available 6.00pm - Midnight (AEST), 7 days a week.  
You can also access support via online chat from 7pm to Midnight (Syd time) 7 days.

#### Mental Health Triage Service (24 hours)

The SA Health Mental Health Triage Service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This service:

* is the main point of access into mental health services
* can provide advice and information in a mental health emergency or crisis situation
* is staffed by mental health clinicians
* will assess and refer to response teams where appropriate.

**Phone:** [13 14 65](tel:13%2014%2065)

#### Homicide Victim Support Group

The Homicide Victim Support Group is a self-help group including people who have suffered the loss of a family member or friend through homicide.

Members join together to:

* help others cope with their trauma
* share their experiences
* provide information about services and systems
* listen to others and share insights into surviving.

**Phone:** [0423 411 055](tel:0423%20411%20055) or [0428 475 618](tel:0428%20475%20618)

#### Road Trauma Support Team

The Road Trauma Support Team of South Australia provides free support for people who have been affected by road trauma, whether directly or indirectly.

This may include:

* vehicle occupants
* family members
* friends
* work colleagues
* bystanders
* emergency service personnel

**Phone:** [0400 705 066](tel:0400%20705%20066) or [1800 069 528](tel:1800%20069%20528)

#### Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends (SA) Inc is part of a worldwide organisation offering friendship and understanding to families following the death of a son or daughter, brother or sister.

Compassionate Friends offers support in the grief and trauma which follows the death of a child at any age and from any cause.

**Phone:** [1300 064 068](tel:1300%20064%20068) or [0456 820 133](tel:0456%20820%20133)  
**Email:** [tcfsainc@outlook.com](mailto:tcfsainc@outlook.com)

#### Kids Helpline

The Kids Helpline is a 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged 5–25 years of age.

**Phone:** [1800 551 800](tel:1800%20551%20800)  
**Email:** [Counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au](mailto:Counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au)

#### eSafety Commissioner

eSafety provides Australians with a place to report serious cyberbullying, image-based abuse and illegal online content.

**Phone:** [1800 880 176](tel:1800%20880%20176)  
**Email Link:** <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/contact-us>

#### Mensline Australia

Mensline is a telephone and online counselling service for men with family and relationship concerns.

**Phone:** [1300 789 978](tel:1300%20789%20978)  
**Chat Link:** [https://mensline.org.au](https://mensline.org.au/)

#### National Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence Counselling Service

[1800RESPECT](tel:1800%20737%20732) is a 24-hour online chat and telephone counselling, information and referral service.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'victims\_rights')%}

## Victims Rights

The Commissioner for Victims’ Rights Provides information and support to victims of crime and other functions

Contact them on: [(08) 8204 9635](tel:(08)%208204%209635)

Or visit the website for more information: [voc.sa.gov.au](https://docassemble.flinders.edu.au/voc.sa.gov.au)

#### Vulnerable Witnesses

Under the Evidence Act, 1929 (SA) special arrangements can be made for witnesses deemed to be “vulnerable” in order to protect them from:

* Embarrassment or distress
* Being intimidated by the atmosphere of the courtroom, or
* For any other proper reason

Some of these special arrangements include:

* **Court Companion:** This allows for witnesses to be accompanied by a volunteer, friend, family member or social worker who is not a witness in the case for the purpose of providing them with a familiar and supportive physical presence whilst you give their evidence.
* **Closed Circuit Television:** This allows witnesses to give evidence from a separate room, instead of the courtroom, and have it transmitted to the courtroom via CCTV.
* **One-way screen:** This means a One-Way Screen is placed between the witness and the accused person so it blocks their view of him or her. It is important to note that the screen acts as a one-way barrier and the accused can see the witness whilst giving evidence.

#### Victims are expected to be informed about:

* How the police investigation is going (unless this may jeopardise the investigation)
* Court and trial processes, including dates, how to attend, and what the victim of crime’s role will be as a witness.
* The name of the accused person, whether they are being charged and what with, if a warrant is issued for their arrest, and any programs available to them.
* Any application of bail made by the accused person, outcomes of the application, and arrangements made for release, including any special conditions that may affect the victim of crime’s welfare.
* The defendant’s period of imprisonment, and to write to the parole board if a decision is to be made about granting parole to the defendant.

#### Victims also have a right to:

* Be protected at court from unnecessary contact with the accused person and their family members or friends
* Make a victim impact statement that may be presented to the court at sentencing if the accused is found guilty

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘Mt Gambier’) %}

## Mount Gambier Courts

**Magistrates Court**

* Magistrates Court is conducted most weekdays.
* Court Room 1 is located on the 1st floor (a lift is available). Public seating is available directly outside the courtroom with small offices nearby for use by Prosecution and Defence counsel.
* Toilet facilities are available next door to the courtroom.

**District Court**

* The District Court visits Mount Gambier 3 times per year – March, July & November for approximately 4 weeks each of these months.
* The District Court is held in Court Room 2 which is located on the ground floor.
* Generally, witnesses appearing for the Defence wait in this public area. There is a separate waiting room for witnesses appearing for the Prosecution.
* Toilet facilities are available on this floor.

**Location & Opening Hours**

**Address:** 41 Bay Road, Mount Gambier, SA.  
**Open:** 9-5 Weekdays  
**Ph:** [(08) 8735 1060](tel:(08)%208735%201060)

**Video Conferencing Suite**

The facilities are used for a range of court matters including Magistrates and District Courts. The suite is situated down a passage away from the general waiting area and is located next door to the Witness Waiting Room.

**Witness Waiting Room**

* This room is for the use of Prosecution witnesses, family and supporters.
* Tea and coffee facilities are available in this room.

**Sheriff’s Officers**

* These officers ensure the safety of witnesses whilst they are in the Court House. They are stationed at the entrance to the building.
* Any questions of a general nature for instance, about the scheduling of the court matter can be directed to one of these officers.

**Disabled Access**

* An access ramp is located at the front entrance to the building.
* Accessible toilets are located in the main foyer.
* A lift is available for use for people using the Magistrates Court on 1st floor.

**Transport**

* **Car Parking:** Off street parking is available at the rear of the Court House. There is no cost for parking.
* **Taxi Services:** taxi rank is located close to the Court House on Bay Road.
* **Cafe:** A Café (Bay Blue) is located next door to the Court House. It serves a range of drinks and light meals.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘Port Augusta’) %}

**Port Augusta Courts**

**Magistrate Court Layout:**

* Court Rooms 1 and 2 are located at the end of the entry corridor.
* There is a small amount of public seating available (Covid safe) around the edges of the two corridors.
* There are small rooms located off the second corridor available for Prosecution & Defense Counsel.
* Clients can ask a Sheriff’s Officer for a bottle of water.
* Public Toilets available at the end of the entry area.

**District Court Layout:**

* District Court with Judges, Prosecutors, Defense Lawyers & other Court Staff coming from Adelaide, sits for approx. 4 weeks every 2 months.
* District Court sits in Room 3 at the end of the second corridor.
* There are seats available for Defense witnesses & the public along the edges of the corridor.
* A very small waiting room for Prosecution witnesses & supporters is at the end of the 2nd corridor, across from Court Room 3 & behind an undulating slatted wood screen.
* A toilet in this area is locked & available only for Staff.

**Witness Waiting Room**

* This is a very small room holding only a small table, about 6 chairs and a small rubbish bin.
* Access to the entry area toilets is past the Defense witnesses & supporters.

The whole Courthouse is air-conditioned which is controlled from Adelaide. You can gain access to fresh air by exiting near the entry point, then returning through the screening unit to the waiting area.

**Video Conferencing Suite**

* Situated at the front of the Courthouse behind the Sheriff’s Officers screening area, there is a small CCTV room for use of vulnerable witnesses (as approved by the Judge) where the witness, VSS Court Supporter and a Sheriff’s Officer sit during examination.
* Alongside this room is a generous sized waiting room where the Victim/Witness, other Prosecution witnesses and supporters wait.
* Others usually waiting in this room are the Investigating Officer & VSS CS.
* There is a sink with a water tap, kettle, disposable hot cups & a rubbish bin so that hot drinks can be made when the Supporter brings resources.
* There is a large Whiteboard on one wall which is used by any children present (and some adults)
* A toilet for client use is just a few metres away from this room in this very secure area.

**Sheriff’s Officers**

* These officers ensure the safety of witnesses whilst they are in the Court House.
* They are stationed at the entrance to the building, they come to the waiting rooms to obtain information, and lead the witnesses to the Court Room or CCTV room when the witness is called. There are usually 2 Sheriff’s Officers present in the District Court Room when Court is in session.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘Adelaide Metro’) %}

## Adelaide Metro Courts

**Location & Opening Hours**

**Address:** Sir Samuel Way Building, 241- 259 Victoria Square, Adelaide, SA, 5000.  
**Open**: 9:30am-4:30pm Weekdays *(Excluding public holidays)*

**Criminal Enquiries:**  
**Ph:** [+61 8 8204 2444](tel:+61%208%208204%202444)  
**Fax:** [+61 8 8124 4642](tel:+61%208%208124%204642)  
**Email:** [ccrcs@courts.sa.gov.au](mailto:ccrcs@courts.sa.gov.au)

**Courts**

The District Court is the principal trial court in South Australia. The Court’s work covers four jurisdictions:

* Civil
* Criminal\*
* Administrativ and Disciplinary Division
* Criminal injuries

\**murder and treason offences can only be heard by the Supreme Court.*

Entrance to the building is via Victoria Square with lift transport to the Ground Floor.

Public toilets are located on the following floors:

* **Level 1 -** Adjacent to Court 1
* **Level 3 -** Opposite the lifts
* **Level 5 -** Opposite the lifts

Accessible toilets are located on level 1 opposite the lifts.

An accessible water fountain is located on level 1 opposite the lifts.

There are witness waiting rooms for Prosecution witnesses in the building.

**Video Conferencing Suite**

The facilities are used for a range of court matters in the District Court.  
The suite is situated in the Supreme Court Building.  
The address for the Supreme Court is 1 Gouger St, Adelaide.

**Witness Waiting Room**

This room is for the use of Prosecution witnesses and family and supporters.

**Sheriff’s Officers**

These officers ensure the safety of witnesses whilst they are in the Court House. They are stationed at the entrance to the building. Any questions of a general nature for instance, about the scheduling of the court matter can be directed to one of these officers.

**Disabled Access**

An access ramp is located at the front entrance to the building.  
Accessible toilets are located in the main foyer.  
A lift is available for use for people using the Magistrates Court on 1st floor.

**Car Parking**

Off street parking is available at the rear of the Court House. There is no cost for parking.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘court\_protocols’ and VSScourt\_subcat == ‘before\_court’) %}

## Before Court Protocols

### **Attending the pre-court conference**

The prosecutor will usually schedule a pre-court conference in which he or she will meet with the witness to go over their statement and give them some idea of what is likely to occur in the courtroom.  
The witness can use this opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the process and what to expect.

### **Arriving at Court**

You will be advised where to meet, and we recommend arriving 10 minutes before the agreed time.

On arrival, meet the witness at your pre-arranged location.

When entering the Court, you will go through security screening, placing any bags or other personal items in a tray to be scanned. Please remember not to bring any items such as scissors, glass bottles or anything that could be perceived as a weapon.

If you are advised that your client is particularly anxious about attending Court, it can be good to have a chat with the Court Sheriff to put the client at ease when you come in.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘court\_protocols’ and VSScourt\_subcat == ‘during\_court’) %}

## During Court Protocols

### **Attending Court**

Ensure you check the Courts List or go to the Information Counter to check which courtroom you need to be in.

Ensure the prosecutor is informed that the witness has arrived and then go to the area where you will be waiting. If a separate, safe place has been arranged, you may need to ask for the bailiff to open the door for you.

If no pre-arranged meeting or location has been arranged, go to the courtroom. The prosecutor will do their best to keep the witness updated with the progress of the case and about when they will probably be called to give their evidence.

If you have any concerns about the accused, you should seek the support of the Court Sheriff. You and your client must follow the instructions and processes set out by the Court Sheriff and other court staff.

Ensure that you provide your client with practical information, such as what to expect during the day, and where bathrooms and other relevant facilities are, such as where to make coffee/tea.

Before the client is called into the courtroom, remind them that they should not be worried if, when they look at you during their testimony, you will not provide any positive or negative response. It is also important to remind them to:

* Address the magistrate or judge as ‘Your Honour’;
* Listen carefully to the questions, making sure they understand what is asked before they answer;
* Ask for the question to be repeated if they don’t understand it or if they didn’t hear it properly;
* Never guess an answer to a question. If they don’t know the answer or can’t remember, they should say so;
* Remain calm and speak clearly;
* Not feel pressured to answer a question quickly. They should take their time thinking and answering;
* Remember that the same (or similar) questions may be asked more than once;
* If they feel upset or distressed, pause, take some deep breaths, or have a drink of water. They should continue only when they are ready; and
* Ask for a break if they need to go to the bathroom or if their anxiety is unmanageable.

When the client is called to give evidence, they will be directed to the witness box, unless other provisions have been made. The prosecution witnesses are classed first. Each witness is cross-examined by the defence lawyer, and there may be re-examination if the prosecution requires it.

In the courtroom, you must remain neutral and impartial at all times. You must not react at all while the witness is giving their evidence and it is important to maintain a neutral facial expression and not make any gestures. You must not react negatively to difficult questions during cross-examination by the defence lawyer, and must appear to remain neutral. You must not touch the client, even if it seems like an appropriate act of reassurance.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘court\_protocols’ and VSScourt\_subcat == ‘after\_court’) %}

## After Court Protocols

Being a witness is a difficult task, the client may want to talk to you about the trial after they have given evidence, and they may express a range of emotions.

You can let them debrief, but it is very important that you just listen to them and how they are feeling.Do not provide any opinions on how things have gone, and do not offer any advice.  
It will be appropriate to recognise that it would have been a difficult thing for the client to do and that they did their best.

It is not appropriate to say what you think the outcome might be, or to discuss their evidence, or any other evidence given. It may be necessary to gently remind the client about this. Remember that there may be appeals and other hearings to follow, so while the matter is still before the Court, great care must be taken in how things are spoken about.

The client may be distressed or may express anger and frustration. If you are concerned about the client’s wellbeing, you can make some suggestions to the client about contacting services that are able to assist them. Although you are not responsible for this aspect, it is important that you do know where to refer the client, so they can receive relevant support.

### **Leaving the Court**

After the court proceedings involving the client have wrapped up for the day, it is important to provide support to the client.

Although there may be some sense of relief felt by you and your client, it is important that it is sensitively discussed, as some clients may feel completely lost and let-down. You should let the client know that they have done their best, and you might ask them how they plan to mark the occasion.

It may help to conclude the day by focusing on the practicals, such as how the client is getting home, what they will do when they get home, and who to contact if they need anything organised beyond their day in court. However, you should not contact anyone on their behalf. It is important that it is clear to the client who they should contact for any assistance if required.

The role of the Companion concludes at the end of the scheduled involvement. Good boundaries must be established at this point, and you must not give your client your contract information.

If you have any concerns about your client’s general demeanour of they say something which raises concerns for you, but do not suggest harm to themselves or another person, then you should advice the VSS Coordinator or the Witness Assistance Service Officer. If you have serious concerns about the client, it is important that you understand that you are not expected to manage the situation on your own. You can suggest Lifeline to the client for immediate support, as it is available 24/7.

It is important that you notify the South Australian Police if there is any risk to the client or any other person. You should debrief with your VSS Coordinator after any such incident and action any self-care strategies that you intend to use to look after yourself.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘court\_protocols’ and VSScourt\_subcat == ‘court\_layout’) %}



***Image sourced from:*** the Office for the Commissioner for Victims Rights.

{%p elif (VSScategories == 'courts' and VSSlocation == ‘court\_support’) %}

## Court Support and Self Care Resources

#### Stopp

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/free-downloads-cbt-information-leaflets-self-help-guides/>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/stoppcards.pdf>

#### Anxiety

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/AcceptingAnxiety.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/AnxietySelfHelp.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/APPLE2.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/AnxietyQR.pdf>

<https://get.gg/docs/TheMindBully.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/PanicSelfHelp.pdf>

#### Self Help and Wellbeing

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/ACE.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/ACT.pdf>

<https://www.get.gg/docs/Battery.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/cards.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/Options.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/5WaysPersonalWellbeing.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/Kitbag.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/Compassion.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/DealingNegativeEmotions.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/Helicopter.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/NourishingDepleting.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/Steps%20to%20Wellbeing.pdf>

#### Positive statements to self and others

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/PositiveAffirmations.pdf>

#### Stress response

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/Adrenaline.pdf>

#### Anger

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/anger.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/AngerQR.pdf>

#### Mindfulness/Relaxation

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/MindfulBreathing.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/ColourBreathing.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/NOW.pdf>

<https://get.gg/docs/Relaxation.pdf>

#### Rumination/worry

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/RuminationWorry.pdf>

#### Wheel of emotion

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/RuminationWorry.pdf>

<https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/worrytree.pdf>

{% endif %}