



How to monitor sexual assault cases when there are no cases at court

If you're a sexual assault advocate you know the challenges associated with prosecuting sexual assault crimes. How can court monitoring be useful if so few sexual assault cases actually end up in front of a judge? Here are some suggestions:

Expand your idea of what court monitoring is

Court monitoring is much more than observing and recording information on current court hearings. It is a process of observing and gathering court information that often includes observing real time court proceedings, but can also include ***conducting research and investigating the court's practices and procedure***. Researching past cases can highlight barriers that prevent cases from being properly investigated or prosecuted. You can then make recommendations that would improve the processing of these cases.

Targeted monitoring and research

You can create a specific project to address a local issue. Publish a report of your findings or summarize them in an article or opinion piece that describes the problem and your recommendations for change. Need some ideas? Consider these examples...

- Review the outcome of several years' worth of sexual assault cases. Are there common themes or concerns? Write a report of your findings with recommendations.
- Is there a sex offender in your community who has gone unchecked? Write a defendant chronology outlining his offenses and the outcome for each case.
- Research and publish a report on the impact of a new law or court policy. Often new policies are enacted but not followed up on to see how they are working.

Contact WATCH!

We can provide you resources, materials, and sample reports to get a targeted court monitoring project off the ground. Call and talk with someone today.