



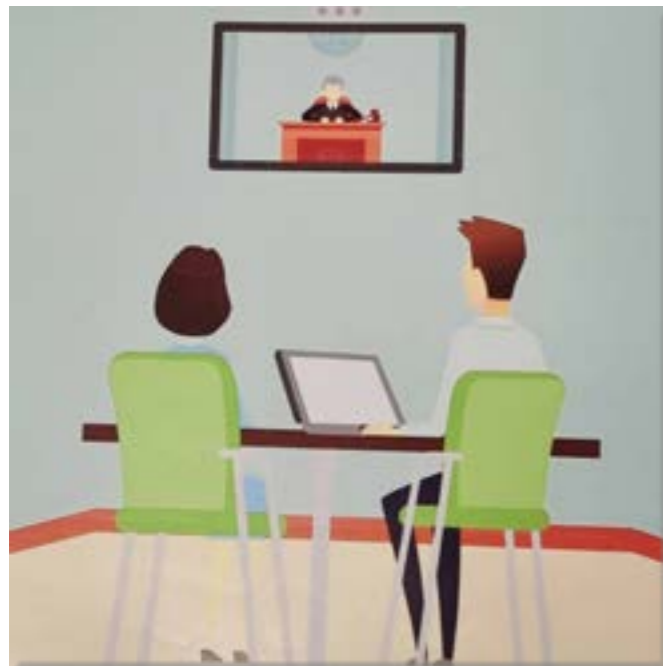
TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN GIVING EVIDENCE:

PACT has arranged vulnerable witness suites in many of the court buildings which are comfortable and safe rooms where you can wait on the day you give evidence.

On the day you go to court, it can take a few hours until you give your evidence. If possible, your PACT volunteer will take you to the special waiting rooms which often have comfortable chairs, games and other activities to do while you wait. When you give evidence it can be over quickly or it can take a long time.

Children and young people under the age of 18 can usually give pre-recorded evidence via a video link away from the main court room in a CCTV or pre-recording room.

The pre-recording room has comfy chairs and a table, a video screen with a camera and microphone where you will talk to the judge, prosecutor and defence lawyer - like a video call. It's a safe room and your PACT volunteer will be next to you while you give your evidence from this room.



Many victims and witnesses worry that the defendant will be able to see them when they give evidence. While the defendant will be in the courtroom and can see you on the video screen, you shouldn't see or hear them because you are in the special pre-recording room with just your PACT volunteer to give evidence. On the screen you should only see the judge, the defence lawyer, the prosecutor, the bailiff and sometimes a legal officer. The defendant can't talk to you and you should not hear them.

You may worry that you won't be believed and the defendant will be found not guilty because of your evidence.

A good way to think about this is to compare going to court to doing a jigsaw puzzle; the judge is putting the puzzle together and there are lots of different pieces, of which your evidence is just one (important) piece. So it's not just about whether or not you are believed, it's about the overall puzzle the judge is looking at.

While your evidence is one puzzle piece, it is a key piece, and this is why it's essential to always tell the truth.

The thing to remember is, you are not in trouble. You have done nothing wrong. But you do have a very important job to do in court - to tell the truth!

Here are some tips that can help you remember what to do when you go to court to give evidence:



Tell the truth. It's normal to feel embarrassed when speaking about what happened. It is still important to tell the truth, even if it is a secret or you need to say rude words.



If the defence lawyer asks you a question and you don't know the answer, it's ok to say "I don't know."



You don't have to agree with everything the defence lawyer says. If you don't agree, say "I don't agree."



This isn't a test where you have to know all the answers. If you can't remember something, it's ok to say "I don't remember."



Defence lawyers sometimes ask things in ways that are hard to understand. It's ok if you don't understand, just say you don't understand the question.



It's normal to feel scared. Just remember the judge is there to make sure everything is fair. Your PACT Support Volunteer will be there to help too.



Sometimes it doesn't take very long to give evidence and it's over in a few minutes. Other times it can take longer.



Be respectful to the people in court. When you speak to the judge it is polite to call them 'Your Honour'.



Speak in a loud and clear voice. Remember, this is your time to tell the truth.



Ask the judge if you need water, to go to the bathroom or you need a break while giving evidence.



Don't talk about what happened or tell your evidence to anyone who isn't supposed to know.



Try breathing slowly and calmly if you feel nervous or scared.