

Building Rapport to Help Gain Trust

The detective was determined to get the guys who gang raped me and left me for dead in an apple orchard. I was 28 years old. He offered me extra blankets to get warm with and before he left the rape exam room, he said, "Before I step out Ruth, is there a trusted person in your life that I can call for you? Shame kept me looking at the floor as he questioned me; but I was able to look him in the eye when he asked me this question. I didn't feel he was disgusted with me or in a hurry to get on to someone or something else. I looked him in the eye and said, "No, there's someone in the waiting room, with my clothes, waiting for me. But, thank you." There was no one in my life I could trust, not even the one in the waiting room. It seemed like this detective wanted to help. So many others just went through the process and didn't concern themselves with how I might feel in a hospital gown, lying on a gurney, amongst a room full of strangers. He said he was going after the rapist. I didn't want to be fooled again. I've heard so many empty promises before, so I still needed to see

some action before I could conclude how trustworthy he really was. I had come to believe that the police were not on my side, ever since I was 13 years old, when I was interrogated like a criminal. I was expected to perform sexually for some of the arresting officers too so I didn't want them involved in the gang rape. I feared them. I never knew if I'd encounter a good cop or a bad cop and I knew very well, that even a seemingly good cop can turn bad when presented with such vulnerability. I had no energy to perform sexually again after being raped. Someone else called the police after I escaped the rapists. My trafficker and everyone on the street reinforced my fears of the police because in the street the fear of being arrested or abused by the police kept any of us from ever calling them for help. Plus, there's always a fear of being labeled a snitch by those in "the game" if you're ever seen talking to the police. I had to hide it from trafficker that I was talking to this detective.

Reassuring Statements

- Is there anything I can do to help you feel safe?
- I'm going to be upfront with you. I'm going to tell you what's going on every step throughout the process.
- I will do what I can to get all your questions answered.
- You are my priority right now.
- We will investigate what we need to investigate because we want you to know the truth.
- I'll take the time to hear you out and give you my full attention if there's anything you want to tell me or anything you want me to help you with.

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