

*Learn more about...*

## PRESERVING EVIDENCE



### In Situations of Sexual Battery/Rape

- **Preserve evidence as much as possible until it is collected**
  - Avoid bathing or showering, urinating, eating or drinking (if oral-genital contact occurred during the assault)
  - Avoid washing clothes worn during the assault, or washing bedding or towels that were part of the incident
  - Save all communications to or from the offender or witnesses via voice mail, text, social media or email about the incident
- **Forensic medical exams (“rape kits”)**
  - **Not** performed at hospitals in Hillsborough County/Tampa except in cases of serious injuries requiring medical attention
  - Performed at the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay by specially trained Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners
  - Can be performed up to 120 hours after the rape
  - Are arranged by law enforcement as part of the reporting process
  - You may choose to have a forensic medical exam even if you choose not to report to the police—contact the Center for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention for an advocate to arrange the exam for you and accompany you if you wish
- **Even if you did not preserve evidence, you may still report the crime**

### In Situations of Domestic/Relationship/ Dating Violence

- Preserve evidence as much as possible until it is collected
- Leave damage to property or dwelling as is for law enforcement to document
- Avoid changing or washing clothing that may be torn or contain blood evidence
- Make sure that bruises and other injuries are photographed by police, medical caregivers, or, as a last resort, a friend or relative
- Save communications to or from the offender or witnesses via voicemail, text, social media or email about the incident

### In Situations of Stalking

- Save every communication to or from the stalker via voicemail, text, social media or email
- Keep a dated log of every incident and contact with the stalker; note any witnesses
- Photograph any items (notes, gifts, etc.) left by the stalker on your car, at your door, in your mailbox, etc., while the items are still in place