

On August 25, 2019, my husband took our daughter to the Cockeysville Police Station to file a police report. I was appalled to find out that she was made to tell her story, not in a room face-to-face with an officer, but in the public lobby of the police station. The lobby in that building is similar to a bank lobby, with an open space and officers behind glass and no privacy whatsoever from anyone who entered the building. It's also necessary to speak loudly, because of the space and the glass. The questions my daughter was asked were personal and the experience she had to describe was embarrassing enough, without being asked to "speak up" and repeat herself to the officer.

In the end, she and I returned to the police station two more times. Each time, she was made to retell her experience right in the public lobby, with whoever was there for whatever reason, listening. As a mother, this was infuriating and unacceptable. My daughter was unprotected. She was brave enough to walk into the police station and tell them what happened to her, yet she was not given the dignity and safety of being able to tell her story in private. She was 15 and this was a terribly embarrassing and humiliating experience for her. And as her mother, I was helpless, as this was the "way it is done."

Victims who enter a police station to tell their stories, to file charges, and to seek guidance and protection, should have the option to tell their stories to an officer in a private, safe space.