

While some of our mothers encountered sympathetic police officers who went out of their way to help their sons, many were shocked at the bias shown against men in the legal system. Sometimes, when dealing with false violence accusations, police expressed sympathy for the accused, acknowledging the 'system' was now stacked against them. But even in these circumstances, they were forced to toe the line and arrest men who they acknowledged were being set up.

With sexual assault allegations our group has talked to prosecutors who admit to being under pressure to push through all such cases into court, even though the evidence isn't there to support the accusations. Mothers were shocked to find police not interested in seeing evidence which could help establish their sons were innocent – such evidence was often ignored, sometimes even destroyed as every effort was made to promote "believe-the-women" justice.

So, the advice from our mothers about handling encounters with the police reflects these negative experiences. This is not saying our police force is corrupt. This is not to deny there are good people doing their best in a very biased system. But the fact is, men can no longer assume they will receive fair treatment from police, particularly when it comes to allegations of violence or sexual assault.

Here's the advice on handling police from MOS:

Don't believe the police will be on your son's side. Know that their role is to provide evidence to a police prosecutor to charge him.

Know your rights when dealing with the police. Your son is legally required only to provide his name, address and date of birth so if he is not under arrest, this is all the information he should provide and he is then entitled to leave. Any further information could be used against him in a court case.

Your son shouldn't give any statements to police without speaking to a lawyer as anything he says will be recorded and later played in court. Making a statement to the police may prohibit him from speaking to other witnesses who have also made statements.

Learn the extent of police powers. Get to understand what constitutes an arrest, what your son's rights are when police execute a search warrant, what they are legally allowed to do in the performance of their duties.

Police will use every trick in the book to make your son believe that they are trying to help him. They may tell him that it will make it easier for him – "I'm offering you the chance to clear your name" - or they can put in a good word for him, or threaten that if he does not say anything it will not end well for him."

Document all his interactions with the police. You or your son are permitted to record conversations with them, despite their protests, provided you are on your property or in a public space and are not interfering with the performance of their duties. Simply just advise them you are recording for his safety and do not take no for an answer.

Make notes of the officers' names, ranks, badge numbers and station(s). Be firm but polite at all times. Don't make the police's job unnecessarily difficult. Your son's record with them, possibly presented in court, could make his case that much more difficult. Be prepared to go to senior management in the police organisation if you are not satisfied with the treatment your son has received.