











COURT CHECKLIST

This checklist may be used by judges and court staff as a reminder of actions the court may take to accommodate the needs of older victims, witnesses and defendants.

STRATEGIES FOR HEARING CASES INVOLVING OLDER PERSONS

BE PATIENT	Older persons may need more time to process information. Allow the older person sufficient time to respond. Remind attorneys to speak one at a time.	 
ACCOMMODATE NEEDS	Identify and consider needs pertaining to mobility, language and communication (assistive devices, interpreters and translators), medication, nutrition, hydration, oxygen, and other medical treatment. Older persons may also need more frequent breaks and comfortable seating. Provide accommodations as needed.	 
PROVIDE A TOUR OF THE COURTROOM	Court staff should offer to work with attorneys and Victim/Witness staff to provide the older person with a tour of the courtroom in advance. Familiarize the older person with seating arrangements and the general process. Provide information on how the courtroom will be accommodated, as needed, to address special needs (such as hearing amplification devices).	 
ENCOURAGE THE USE OF ADVOCATES	Court advocates are particularly helpful for older victims and witnesses who may be intimidated by their participation in court proceedings. Encourage the use of advocates throughout the judicial process. If advocates are not available, consider training and using court staff to guide older persons through the court process.	 
CONSIDER WAITING AREA	Make sure there is a safe, comfortable and accessible waiting area (preferably away from the assigned courtroom).	 
BE FLEXIBLE IN SCHEDULING	The court should make efforts to be flexible in calendaring cases. Some older persons may need hearings scheduled at a time that best accommodates medical needs or fluctuations in capacity and mental alertness. Also consider the length of the hearing. Avoid delays once the victim is present.	