



False Police Report Crackdown in Merced

By ABC30

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Merced, CA, USA Deputy Tom MacKenzie said, "People are using us as a scapegoat for when they need an alibi or are stepping out on their significant other. They think it's convenient to call in and report being kidnapped or raped when they're trying to come up with a cover story."

Deputy Tom Mackenzie says the worst part of the fake claims is that they take officers away from real cases with legitimate victims. And filing a false report is a crime itself.

"Not only can they be charged with it, but under California state law, we can actually go after them civilly for reimbursement costs for all the money incurred by our department," said MacKenzie.

On the other hand, the Sheriff's Office and staff members here at Valley Crisis Center say it's critical for anyone who has been assaulted to come forward.

And Volunteer Coordinator Patricia Bauer says the agency will stand by victims regardless of whether their cases can be proven.

"Our job as crisis advocates and providing support services is just to be supportive not conduct a criminal investigation, not to ask the victim to provide to details so we can judge the validity of the claims. Our job is solely to be there for support," said Bauer.

Bauer says the center has seen an increase in the number of sexual assault cases being reported in Merced County. And she doesn't want a few false reports to change the way real victims are perceived.

"I would want to tell the community that sexual assault does happen, that there are victims who come forward who really have been assaulted. Most of the people who actually come in and seek services truly are victims," said Bauer.

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When I found the above report initially, it was dated January 2, 2009 at 9:59:18 PM PST and was credited to Sara Sandrik