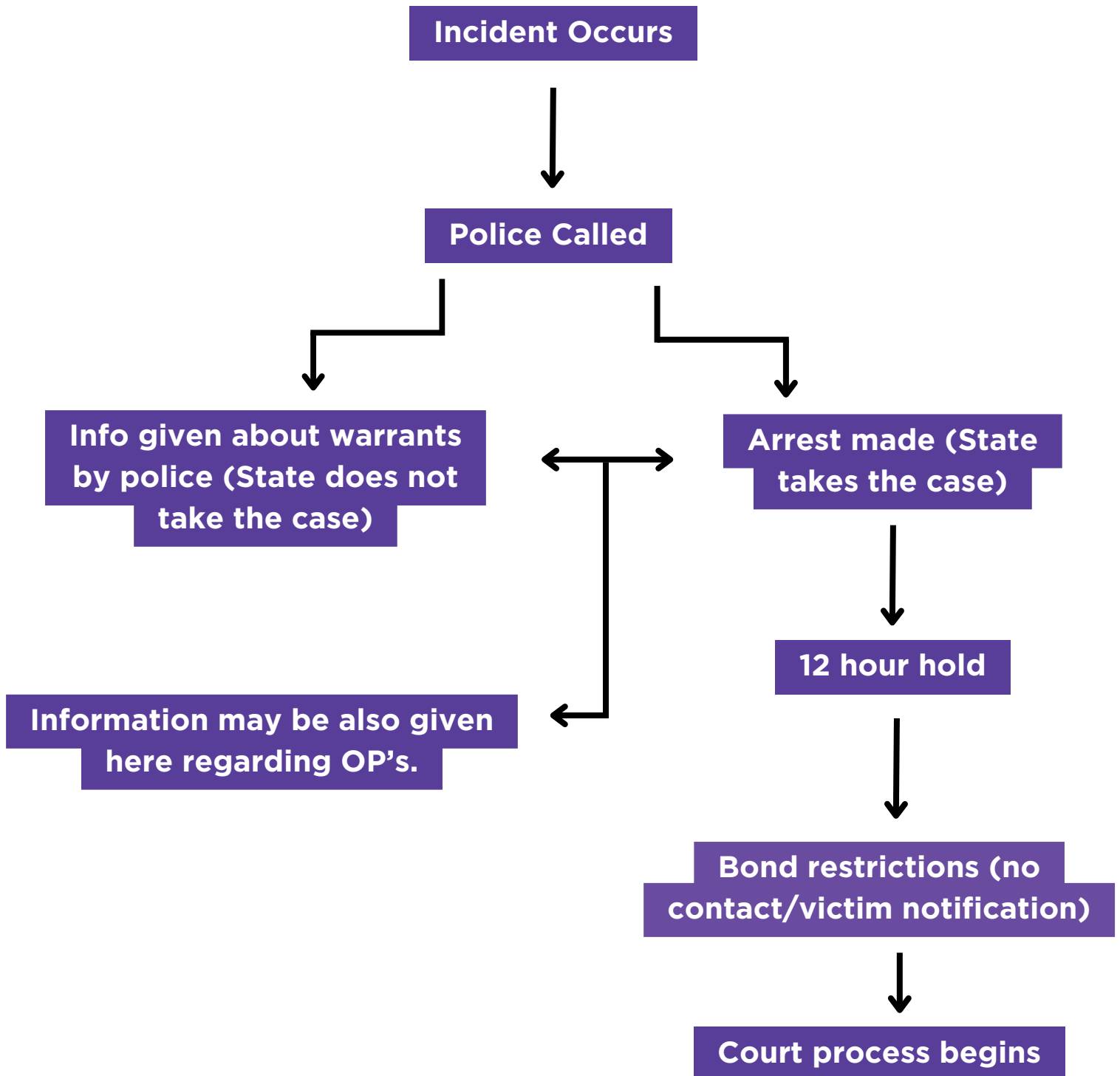



## “Where do I go from here?”




# The Court Process

\*At this point, the offender has been arrested, placed on a 12-hour hold, and given bond restrictions for release.\*

**\*1st Appearance/General Sessions Court** - This is where the judge determines if there is enough evidence for the case to continue, but sentencing is not determined here. In our jurisdiction, these are usually held on Thursdays.




**Plea Agreements** - This is where a deal is made between prosecutor and defendant before a trial occurs.




*\*Preliminary hearing will likely take place prior to the case being bound over.*

**Bound over to the Grand Jury** - The jury determines if there is enough evidence to send the case to trial. Indictment for formal charges will occur here if there is enough evidence.



**Arraignment** - For felony cases, the circuit court judge will again notify the offender of the charges brought against him/her. This is the first official proceeding where the offender is called before a competent jurisdiction, officially charged, and a plea is entered.



*\*Discussion/motion dates may occur in between these*

**Trial** - It begins with opening statements, evidence is presented, the judge gives jury instructions, the jury deliberates, and a verdict is reached.

\*These are the general court appearances that will have to be made by the defendant/abuser. There may be additional court dates directly before or after the general session's court, depending on the circumstances. The victim will not have to attend all of these. Most court cases are dealt with at the general session level, where the defendant can accept the DA's offer. Before this offer is made, the victim will speak with domestic violence representatives, and based on the victim's statements, the representative will speak with the DA, who will then make an offer to the defendant. It is important to keep in mind that the offer is based upon the DA's expertise, so the offer does not always directly reflect the victim's judgments.