

Instructor Resource Guide



Trauma-Informed Approach to Sexual Assault Investigations

Course ID# 4070

Revised: August 2024

ABSTRACT

This course is designed to meet the legislative mandate provided by S.B. 1402 in the 88th Regular Legislative Session and Chapter 1701.272 of the Texas Occupations Code. Trauma-Informed Approach to Sexual Assault Investigations is designed to teach all officers how to use a trauma-informed approach when using best practices and techniques to effectively recognize, investigate, and document cases of child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault. This course is required to be completed not later than the last day of the first full continuing education training period after the date the officer is licensed under the Texas Occupations Code § 1701.253 unless the officer completes the program as part of their basic training course.

Instructor Resource Guide:

This is an Instructor Resource Guide (IRG), not a lesson plan. The purpose of the IRG is to outline the minimum state requirements of what must be taught for a course to be considered compliant and receive TCOLE credit. The learning objectives provided in this IRG are the minimum state requirements for the training and must not be changed or altered.

- A qualified instructor **shall** develop the IRG into a lesson plan that meets their organization and student needs and must be kept in a training file for auditing purposes.

Please note: It is the responsibility of the Academy and/or Contractual Training Provider to ensure the IRG is developed into a complete lesson plan based on the requirements outlined in the IRG for a particular topic.

Lesson Plan:

Each organization is charged with creating their own lesson plan for how the organization will disseminate the information in the IRG.

- The IRG is designed to assist the instructor/subject matter expert in developing comprehensive lesson plans. The use of current statistics, best practice models, and scenario-based training should also be included in the lesson plan development. Instructors are encouraged to add additional activities.
- The institutions and instructors will determine how much time is spent on each topic/module, how many/what kind of examples or exercises are used during their presentation, and how in-depth they review each topic in the course they present.
- Any activity that is **suggested** is just that, an example or suggestion, and is not mandated for inclusion.
- Anything that is **required** must be included in the instructor's lesson plan.

Note to Trainers:

It is the responsibility of the Academy and/or Training Coordinator to ensure this curriculum and its materials are kept up to date. Refer to curriculum and legal resources for changes in

subject matter or laws relating to this topic as well as the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement website at www.tcole.texas.gov for edits due to course review. Training providers must keep a complete training file on all courses reported for TCOLE credit.

Student Prerequisites:

- None

Instructor Prerequisites:

An instructor must be a subject matter expert in the topic and must have documented knowledge/training/education and provide an instructor's biography that documents subject matter expertise. It is the responsibility of the training academy/training coordinator to select qualified instructors. A TCOLE instructor certification does not certify someone to teach any topic.

- If a documented subject matter expert does not hold a TCOLE instructor certification, the instructor must be approved in writing by the department's training coordinator or chief administrative officer and kept in the training file for the course.
- This course may be instructed by a licensed mental health professional who possesses a master's degree or higher in a field of mental or behavioral health with at least two (2) years' experience instructing law enforcement personnel.
- This course may be instructed by a licensed peace officer with at least two (2) years' experience as a Mental Health Officer or on a Crisis Intervention team.
- A co-instructor who maintains a position on a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), as a victim liaison, or as a victim advocate is highly recommended.
- A co-instructor who has experience working as part of a Children's Advocacy Center multidisciplinary team member or as a licensed child mental health professional is highly recommended.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

- This instructional resource guide uses the term victim to refer to individuals who have experienced sexual assault, to reflect language used in the Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure. Please be aware that survivors of sexual assault may be participants of the class and prefer the term survivor.
- This instructional resource guide uses the term sexual assault for both adults and children, including instances of child sexual abuse. Where appropriate, information specifically concerning adults or children will be explicitly noted.

Length of Course:

It is the training coordinator's responsibility to ensure the minimum hours are being met. Students are required to attend all classroom hours as listed in this instructor resource guide, there is no 10% attendance rule. TCOLE Rule 218.1 (C)(4) states that failure to meet the minimum course length may be grounds for denial of training. This course shall be taught the minimum hours that are listed in this guide and the student shall attend the entire class to receive credit.

- 16 hours, minimum.

Assessment:

- Training providers are responsible for creating student assessments and documenting the mastery of all objectives in this course using various testing assessment opportunities.
 - Assessment opportunities include oral or written testing, interaction with instructor and students, case study and scenario, and other means of testing student's application of the skills taught as the instructor or department deems appropriate.
- The minimum passing score shall be 70%.

Unit 1 Prevalence, Barriers to Reporting, and Biases

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Statistically, at least one person in the class will have at some point in their life been a victim of sexual assault. Throughout the instruction of the class, all instructors should keep in mind the sensitive nature of the content and provide a learning environment which promotes education without re-traumatizing learners.

Resources for statistics for Unit 1 can be found in Appendix A.

It is the responsibility of the instructor or training provider to ensure the data used for statistics is current.

Use local statistics from the agency or area in which the course is being taught or, if local statistics are not available, use statistics for a demographically similar area.

By using a trauma-informed approach to investigations, law enforcement professionals can build an environment conducive for survivors to report assaults and improve criminal justice outcomes for sexual assault. Throughout the course, remind learners of this to reinforce the link between a trauma-informed approach and law enforcement duties.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY: Each of us holds a set of perspectives which help us navigate a complex world efficiently. The word bias may make some feel as though they are being attacked. Encourage learners to be curious and open to new ideas. As appropriate, share real-life experiences focusing on the practical benefits of reflecting on biases as law enforcement professionals.

At the beginning of the course, spend about 10 minutes discussing implicit biases, especially Just World Bias, and how it can influence the way in which learners may interact with victims in certain ways. This information will be covered in greater detail in later sections but a brief introduction before discussing the material is intended to maximize receptiveness.

This course contains sensitive material, and may be viewed as shaming, blaming, or critical of law enforcement practices. It is important to gain audience buy-in before discussing such topics, to not be offensive, and expand learner's self-reflection and self-awareness.

- Optional resource: <https://opentextbc.ca/socialpsychology/chapter/biases-in-attribution/>

1.1 Define different types of sexual assault.

A. Applicable to any age:

- i. Sexual assault. Penal Code, § 22.011
- ii. Aggravated sexual assault. Penal Code, § 22.021
- iii. Indecency with a child. Penal Code, § 21.11
- iv. Perpetrators can be any gender.

B. Child sexual abuse:

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: The definition of child varies between different statutes and offenses. Instructors should advise learners to review the specific statute applicable to the victim to determine the correct age classification as a child.

- i. Involves any interaction between a child and an adult or other child in which the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or an observer.
- ii. May include both touching and/or non-touching behaviors.
- iii. Includes failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.
- iv. Compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct as defined by Penal Code, § 43.01
- v. Any act constituting an offense under Penal Code, § 43.25
- vi. A child of any age can be a victim.
- vii. Sexual abuse is almost always perpetrated by someone who is in a position of trust.
- viii. The child's non-abusing caregiver may be unaware the abuse is happening.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: The definitions of sexual assault in this unit are intended to describe the distinction between sexual contact which has been consented to, and that which has not. Remind learners there are many other offenses which may constitute sexual assault for the purposes of investigating in a trauma-informed manner, and learners should be familiar with the details of those.

1.2 Define consent.

- A. Consent is an informed, voluntary agreement from all participants for sexual activity.
- B. Even if consent was given at an earlier point, if consent is withdrawn and the other participant continues, it becomes sexual assault at that point.
- C. Consent cannot be given by individuals who are:
 - i. Underage
 1. The age of consent varies dependent on the circumstances surrounding the incident.
 - ii. Intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol.
 - iii. Pressured, intimidated, or threatened into engaging in sexual activity.
 - iv. Asleep or unconscious
- D. Penal Code Sec. 22.011 (b)
- E. Sexual assault can be committed in any relationship, even if the victim is married to or held a previous relationship with the perpetrator.
- F. Most perpetrators are known to victims.

- G. Perpetrators often choose vulnerable victims and those they believe can be overtaken.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Victims may self-blame because they are subject to cultural and societal biases. They may think because they were drinking, wearing revealing clothing, or flirting, they are responsible for the assault. Consent must be given for any sexual activity and can be withdrawn at any time. Sexual assault is crime of power and control. It is important for law enforcement officers to not victim-blame and to be objective and compassionate during the interview and investigation.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Discuss the following scenarios to demonstrate consent or non-consent such as:

- If person is incapacitated because of drugs or alcohol.
- Intimate partner relationships where consent has been given in the past.
- Consensual activity before situation becomes uncomfortable.
- Involuntary arousal when not consenting to activity.
- A victim who is too young to consent. The perpetrator may also be a child by legal standards.

If the instructor has had cases involving a lack of or withdrawn consent, the instructor can share details of the case experience with the class.

1.3 Identify the prevalence of sexual assault.

A. Statistics:

i. By area:

1. National rates of sexual assault
2. State rates of sexual assault
3. Local rates of sexual assault

ii. By type of report:

1. Estimated number of occurrences reported and unreported
2. Number of cases reported
3. Number of cases leading to arrest
4. Number of cases resulting in a conviction
5. Number of cases leading to incarceration

B. Reports of sexual assault are under reported.

- i. Incidents of child sexual assault on a national scale are difficult to estimate because so many cases are not reported.
- ii. In Texas, less than 10% of victims report sexual assault to law enforcement.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Compare local sexual assault statistics to state and national statistics, including reports, arrests, prosecutions, convictions, and incarcerations. This local data will be used throughout Unit 1 to build an understanding of the prevalence of sexual assault, the prevalence of sexual assault in specific groups in the local area, and barriers to reporting assault to law enforcement.

Illustrating the prevalence of sexual assault in adult and child populations, as well as the difference in rates of occurrences and reported assaults, highlights the areas in need of improvement for agencies and law enforcement personnel.

1.4 Recognize vulnerable populations.

- A. Vulnerable populations may be at higher risk of becoming victims of crime and may have a more difficult time participating in the justice system.
 - i. Vulnerability may be due to inclusion in a marginalized community or because they are underserved.
 - ii. Individuals can be members of more than one vulnerable population.
- B. Marginalized communities:
 - i. Include communities with one or more characteristics who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life or who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent inequality.
 - ii. Members of marginalized communities may have experienced unconscious bias, discrimination, and mistreatment.
 - iii. These experiences may affect how marginalized communities engage and interact with the criminal justice system.
- C. Underserved populations
 - i. 34 USC §12291
 - ii. Victims of sexual assault may belong to populations not usually considered inherently more vulnerable but may be underserved because services have not been designed for them.
 - 1. For example, male or gender non-conforming victims lacking access to shelter or counseling because most local programs are designed for female victims.

1.5 Identify risk factors for vulnerable populations.

- A. Many factors can contribute to a person's level of vulnerability. Factors may include:
 - i. Age
 - 1. Children
 - 2. Elderly

- ii. Gender identity
- iii. Geographic location
- iv. Homelessness
- v. Immigration status
- vi. Incarceration
- vii. Language barriers
- viii. Persons living with physical or mental disabilities
- ix. National origin
- x. Race and ethnicity
- xi. Religion
- xii. Sexual orientation

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Use local data to identify vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved populations in the areas the learner’s work. Make sure to include data on both child and adult populations where relevant.

Local demographics should inform the instructor where to emphasize information specific to the focus of the class. Be sure to include information on any specific groups learners may meet during their duties. For example, student populations, military bases, colonias, tribal reservations, etc.

Having a general understanding of vulnerable, marginalized, and underserved populations in the area can help law enforcement professionals respond in a trauma-informed manner by understanding the barriers individual victims may face to reporting a sexual assault. These approaches will break down barriers to reporting and promote better criminal justice outcomes and safer communities. General and specific barriers to reporting will be covered below and instruction about these barriers should be informed by the general population demographics and reporting rates already covered.

1.6 Identify barriers to reporting sexual assault.

- A. It is important for law enforcement professionals to understand victims may not report because they are sometimes unable to.
- B. Offer support when they do come forward and, where possible, work to reduce the barriers which affect victim reporting.
- C. Barriers to reporting may be attitudinal or systemic.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Explain to learners barriers may have internal, social, or societal origins or may originate from a combination thereof. Attitudinal and systemic are broad categories used for instructional purposes.

- D. Attitudinal barriers

- i. Delayed reporting
 - 1. May occur due to the time which has passed since the assault, the victims' age at the time, or changes in their circumstances.
 - 2. Children may delay disclosure until adulthood, and adults may feel more empowered to report once they are no longer experiencing abuse.
 - 3. Delayed reporting can lead to hesitancy and fear the report may not be taken seriously.
 - 4. Delaying reporting to law enforcement does not mean the assault did not happen.
- ii. Self-blame and shame
 - 1. Victims may self-blame and feel shame or embarrassment.
 - 2. Victims may also want to protect family or community members from the shame of the assault.
- iii. Fear of judgment
 - 1. Victim-shaming/Victim-blaming
 - 2. Concerns about being judged or not believed.
 - 3. Fears related to the perpetrator, family, or community.
 - Fear others will not believe they could be assaulted because society does not view them as sexual due to their physical appearance, age, sex, weight, or disabilities.
- iv. Minimization of experience
 - 1. Victims might minimize the severity of the assault.
 - 2. May have a mismatch between their understanding of what sexual assault is and their experience.
 - 3. Depending on the person's age or ability, they may not be able to recognize or disclose a sexual assault.
- v. Retaliation and consequences
 - 1. Children may believe they will be punished or blamed.
 - 2. Fear of collateral punishments from reporting such as promotions being withheld.
 - 3. Not wanting family members or friends to be prosecuted.
 - 4. Prior consensual and/or marital relationship with perpetrator.
 - 5. Fear of retaliation by the perpetrator against the victim, a pet, a family member, or friend.

- vi. Victims may be discouraged from reporting by family members or loved ones who face the same barriers victims face in disclosing.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Some barriers to reporting may be systemic, rather than specific to circumstances individual law enforcement personnel can remedy. However, it is important to make learners aware of these barriers to better understand behaviors victims may exhibit and the responses victims may have when reporting sexual assault to law enforcement.

E. Systemic barriers

i. Resource and communication barriers

1. Dependence on perpetrator

- Fear of losing independence, home, or support.
- Isolation from family, friends, or society.
- Perpetrator may withhold care or assistive devices, hindering access to help.

2. Lack of resources

- Limited availability of time
- Insufficient financial resources
- Lack of child-care
- Lack of transportation

3. Communication difficulties

- Language access due to disability or limited English proficiency.
- Language proficiency may be contextual regarding situation and stress.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Remind learners while there is crossover between limited English proficiency and immigrant communities, not all immigrants have limited English proficiency and not all individuals with limited English proficiency are immigrants.

4. Technological and physical barriers

- Lack of access to services and technology
- Physical isolation from social services, medical care, or law enforcement.

5. Housing and economic factors

- Unhoused
- Unstable housing
- Housing is owned, leased, or paid for by the perpetrator or someone else who will evict the victim if they report.

- Economic consequences including retaliation, and/or intimidation from perpetrator.
- ii. Fear of discrimination
 1. Concerns based on gender identity, sexual orientation, race, or reinforcing negative stereotypes.
 2. A “tough it out” mentality, particularly in military, law enforcement, and similar cultures.
 - iii. Privacy concerns
 1. Distrust of outsiders
 2. Concerns about confidentiality
 3. Lack of anonymity
 4. Fear of social ostracism
 5. Unwanted exposure of sexual orientation or gender identity
 6. Lack of confidentiality from leaders.
 - Commonly associated with the military, law enforcement, and similar cultures.
 - iv. Distrust of law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system
 1. Fear of arrest, detention, or negative legal consequences.
 2. Fear of the investigation failing.
 3. Concerns about involvement in illegal activities such as sex work or use of illicit substances.
 4. Previous negative experiences with law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
 5. Concerns about increased community surveillance.
 6. Fear of causing complications to their immigration status.
 7. Fear of being unjustly labeled as the perpetrator.

F. These barriers do not negate the fact of a sexual assault and the need for law enforcement response when a sexual assault is reported.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Instructor must have learners complete an activity to make learners aware of local demographics and barriers to reporting sexual assault.

Using the information about vulnerable populations, have learners analyze how different barriers may affect different groups of people.

- Illustrate to learners how barriers may impact many different populations in different ways.

- Identify what types of barriers to reporting are common in their area for the general population and what might compound those barriers for vulnerable, marginalized, or underserved populations.

Remind learners just because someone is at a lower risk, does not mean they cannot be assaulted.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY: Prior to teaching about biases and consent, instructors must complete an activity which allows learners to examine their personal biases pertaining to sexual assault.

This activity may be administered privately, without collecting information from the learners which might lead to self-censorship. Some examples of such an activity are a true or false survey or agree/disagree scenarios. Increasing self-awareness of possible biases or believed myths about sexual assault will engage the learners in self-reflection and help them respond in a trauma-informed manner to victims of sexual assault.

1.7 Identify how biases about sexual assault victims affect law enforcement response.

- A. Bias is a human trait resulting from the need to classify individuals into categories as information is quickly processed and to make sense of the world.
 - i. Often manifests as an inclination or preference for, or against, one person or group.
 - ii. Most biases do not come from a place of bad intent.
 1. Often formed through years of different influences the individual has no control over and may not have noticed.
 - iii. Biases affects decision-making in different ways:
 1. Perception of people and reality.
 2. Attitudes or reactions toward certain people.
 3. Behavior or receptiveness towards certain people.
 4. The aspects of a person which get the most attention.
 5. How much active listening is done to certain people.
 6. Micro-affirmations or how much or how little comfort certain people in certain situations are given.
 - iv. Biases become problematic when they cause negative attitudes and beliefs about others.
 1. Can keep officers from understanding a civilian's message or point of view.
 2. Can prevent officers from responding fairly and objectively to a situation.
 3. Can lead to discriminatory, exclusionary, or harmful actions.
 - v. Having biases regarding sexual assault can be detrimental to an officer's ability to provide trauma-informed responses.

- B. Just world hypothesis:
 - i. A tendency to make attributions based on the belief the world is fundamentally fair or just.
 - ii. An assumption that the outcomes people experience are fair.
 - iii. People get what they deserve.
- C. Just world bias and victim-blaming:
 - i. An individual's greater agreement with just world beliefs links to harsher social attitudes and greater victim degradation.
 - ii. Examples of just world bias:
 - 1. Reacting to news of a particular crime by blaming the victim.
 - 2. Apportionment of responsibility to members of marginalized groups for the predicaments they face.
 - iii. Just world bias acts as a barrier to empathy.
 - iv. Blaming the victim reinforces people's general sense the world is a fair place and helps them to feel safer from being victimized. According to the just world logic:
 - 1. Victims are bad people who get what they deserve.
 - 2. Good people could not be the victims of similar misfortunes.
- D. Just world bias and defensive attribution:
 - i. An attribution which defends the thinker both from the notion they could be the victim of an unfortunate outcome, and that they could be held responsible as the victim.
 - ii. Harm avoidance vs. blame avoidance:
 - 1. Harm avoidance – "It's unlikely to happen to me because I don't put myself in unsafe positions."
 - 2. Blame avoidance – "It's not my fault this happened. It's because of the poor training I received."
 - 3. The more a person identifies with a victim, the less likely they are to blame the victim.
 - 4. Conversely, the more a person identifies with a perpetrator, the more likely they are to place blame onto the victim.
 - iii. Consequences of biased thinking:
 - 1. Peace officers writing biased reports of sexual assault which hinder the investigation.

2. Peace officers accusing the victim of making a false report because bias leads them to believe the victim is lying.
 - a. Leads to mistrust of law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

E. “Ideal victim” myth:

- i. Myth states: the “ideal” or “real” victim can prove their victim status and establish the credibility of their sexual assault claims by demonstrating resistance to the assault and that their resistance took a socially expected form, preferably by vigorous physical fighting back.
- ii. Myth assumes a “hidden perpetrator” and a “morally upright” victim.
- iii. Used to undermine credibility of the victim.
- iv. Defaults to stereotypes of what an “authentic victim” is, which leads to bias.
- v. There is no such thing as an “ideal” victim.
- vi. Factors which do not disqualify a sexual assault victim:
 1. What they were wearing.
 2. Where they were.
 3. Whether they were under the influence.
 4. Did they encourage/antagonize the perpetrator.
 5. Did they know or have a relationship with the perpetrator.
 6. Did they fight back.
- vii. There are different natures, complexities, and range of ways in which people react with and cope with the violation and trauma of sexual assaults.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Learning about the prevalence of sexual assault and the barriers to reporting sexual assault brings awareness to the high prevalence of assaults and how vastly under reported they are. Barriers to reporting can also include biases and myths about sexual assault by both victims and law enforcement. Due to biases and myths about sexual assault, a victim may self-blame, and law enforcement may victim-blame for the incident. By dispelling these biases and myths, and using a trauma-informed approach, victims will feel supported in reporting sexual assault. Higher reporting of sexual assaults will increase participation in the criminal justice system, allow for better collection of evidence for prosecution, and ultimately make communities safer.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY: Instructor must have learners complete an activity to have learners differentiate between common facts and myths about sexual assault. Learners should identify how “ideal victim” myths and/or just world bias plays into common myths about sexual assault. Include examples of both adult sexual assault and child sexual abuse.

Unit 2 The Brain and Trauma

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Learning how trauma affects different parts of the brain helps law enforcement understand how victims might react to traumatic experiences.

Before teaching the course, review the following on how the brain reacts during trauma:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwTQ_U3p5Wc&t=5061s
- <https://sakitta.org/toolkit/index.cfm?fuseaction=tool&tool=48>

Resources for how trauma affects the parts of the brain and more about Unit 2 can be found in Appendix B.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY: As a pre-activity to this unit, demonstrate how the brain automatically responds in traumatic situations. Provide an everyday example, such as a car accident or a near miss. Ask learners about their immediate reactions and feelings. Did their body tingle or did they feel like needles were shooting through their body? Did they feel like they were in control or watching from a distance? Could they remember fine details about the cars around them? Did they just react?

Discuss with learners that, unlike most car accidents or near accidents, sexual assault is an intentional, targeted act of violation, often perpetrated by a person the victim knows. This may change or exacerbate the natural trauma response a victim may have in comparison to the car accident example.

Discuss with learners that most sexual assault victims may not be making an immediate report, which may change how they behave. Their trauma response in the moment may be different from their trauma response at the time of report.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Show this video looking at a snake and it striking to demonstrate the automatic and involuntary reflexive responses.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwTQ_U3p5Wc&t=5061s (23:21) This situation is not as traumatic as a sexual assault, but it illustrates the automatic response of the brain.

2.1 Define trauma.

- A. Trauma is an event which combines fear, horror, or terror with actual or perceived lack of control.
- B. Trauma is often a life-changing event with negative, sometimes lifelong consequences.
- C. Trauma is connected to physical and behavioral health and well-being.
- D. Complex trauma exposure refers to experiences of multiple traumatic events which occur throughout an individual's life.
 1. Occurrences may be simultaneous or sequential.
 2. Often refers to chronic child maltreatment beginning in early childhood, including abuse, neglect, and witnessing domestic violence.

2.2 Identify parts of the brain affected by trauma.

- A. Experiencing trauma during brain development may impact development.
 - i. The younger the child the more significant the impact may be.
 - ii. Development continues until an individual reaches their late twenties.
- B. The brain stem, also known as the “survival brain”, develops first and controls responses to survival and automatic responses such as breathing, sleep, and blood pressure.
 - i. Every piece of information which enters the brain passes through the brainstem.
 - ii. Trauma can impair brainstem development and function, disrupting how information is processed and affecting basic bodily functions.
 - iii. Extensive childhood trauma can cause a person to have an underdeveloped “thinking brain” due to their overactive “survival brain”.
- C. The amygdala is involved in the formation and storage of information related to emotional events.
 - i. Facilitates long-term memory formation.
 - ii. Trauma can make this part of the brain become hyperactive.
 - iii. Helps recognize danger
 - iv. Automatically triggers the defense circuitry to prepare a reaction to the threat.
- D. The hippocampus aids in learning and memory.
 - i. Compares what you see, smell, and hear with your instincts about safety and danger.
 - ii. During a traumatic event, it goes through two stages:
 - 1. Flashbulb mode – immediately goes into overdrive to record as much detail as possible.
 - 2. Fragmented/refractory mode – works on organizing what was recorded and has less focus on new, complex information.
- E. The prefrontal cortex, also known as the “thinking brain”, is the center of executive functions.
 - i. Involved in managing complex processes such as:
 - 1. Problem solving
 - 2. Logic
 - 3. Planning
 - 4. Memory
- F. The Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis (HPA Axis) releases hormones in response to stress and trauma.

- i. Hormones can be helpful in responding to protect emotional and physical safety but may make it difficult to encode and consolidate memories.
 - ii. Main stress hormones released: opioids, oxytocin, catecholamines and cortisol.
- G. The defense circuitry activates survival reflexes, self-protection habits, and alters memory encoding and consolidation.
- i. Always scanning for danger.
 - ii. When danger or stress is detected, the defense circuitry can rapidly take control of different parts of the brain.
 1. The rational prefrontal cortex, impairing its ability to function effectively.
 2. Attention, focusing on immediate threats.
 3. Behavior, shifting to reflexive and habitual responses.
 4. Memory, affecting what information is encoded and retained.
 - iii. May also become impaired or temporarily “taken offline.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Instructors should ensure learners understand how victim demeanor may be affected by chemicals automatically released in the body during trauma.

Prior to teaching this section, watch the videos in Appendix B to understand the natural release of stress hormones during trauma and the ways they affect the body.

2.3 Identify how trauma responses affect behavior.

- A. Trauma responses are automatic and help protect the individual during a traumatic event.
- B. When the brain detects a threat, hard-wired automatic defense behaviors are activated.
- C. During traumatic events, the prefrontal cortex becomes less effective, and a person might limit the ability to think, plan, and reason.
 - i. This impairment not only affects planning and decision-making but also impacts the brain's ability to organize experiences into logical sequences.
 - ii. Brain reverts to habitual and ingrained behaviors.
- D. Defense cascade reflexes are involuntary and automatic for survival.
 - i. Freeze:
 1. Often the first defense cascade response.
 2. Victim will be able to move but may go tense, still, or silent.
 3. Can be confused with two survival reflexes: tonic immobility and collapsed immobility.
 4. Freezing is not giving consent.

- ii. Fight or flight:
 - 1. These responses are not mutually exclusive.
 - 2. Unable to think logically and analyze options rationally.
 - 3. Response may include:
 - a. Physically fighting, pushing, struggling, fighting verbally by saying 'no'.
 - b. Running, hiding, or backing away.
- iii. Involuntary compliance:
 - 1. Compliance with a perpetrator's demands due to fear, coercion, or perceived lack of options.
 - 2. Examples of why a person may comply during an assault:
 - a. The perpetrator threatened the victim with physical harm or violence against them or their loved ones.
 - b. The perpetrator may be in a position of authority or trust over the victim, exploiting this power dynamic to force compliance.
 - c. The perpetrator uses physical force, making it difficult or impossible for the victim to resist.
 - d. The perpetrator isolates the victim from help or support, making them feel helpless and more likely to comply.
 - e. The victim is given drugs or alcohol without their knowledge or consent, impairing their judgement and ability to resist.

2.4 Identify the signs of the three extreme survival reflexes.

A. Dissociation:

- i. The individual's brain copes by "disconnecting" from the body's internal awareness.
- ii. Awareness is automatically and involuntarily "disconnected" from internal awareness, especially disturbing and painful sensations and emotions.
- iii. Dissociation can manifest in various ways.
 - 1. Described as an out of body experience where the individual feels detached from reality.
 - 2. The person's attention and awareness are altered.
 - 3. May accompany behaviors such as fighting, fleeing, or tonic or collapsed immobility.
- iv. Dissociation can be automatic for people who were traumatized earlier in life.

B. Tonic immobility:

- i. A state of involuntary paralysis and where the person is unable to move or speak.
 - ii. Victims may remain alert and aware or experience dissociation.
 - iii. Triggers:
 - 1. Extreme fear
 - 2. Physical contact with the perpetrator
 - 3. Physical restraint
 - 4. Feeling trapped
 - iv. Physical sensations and symptoms:
 - 1. Rigid limbs with “waxy mobility”; arms and legs are stiff but can be moved or positioned.
 - 2. May experience:
 - a. Fixed or unfocused staring
 - b. Coldness
 - c. Numbness or insensitivity to pain
 - d. Eyes closing for intermittent periods.
 - v. Episodes of tonic immobility usually occur after a failed struggle or an attempt to flee.
 - vi. Victim statements may include phrases such as:
 - 1. “I tried to scream, but I couldn’t.”
 - 2. “I tried to push them away, but I couldn’t move.”
- C. Collapsed immobility:
- i. Involves a sudden drop in heart rate and blood pressure, potentially causing fainting or passing out.
 - 1. Sudden onset but gradual offset.
 - 2. May be described as “playing possum”.
 - ii. Triggers:
 - 1. Extreme fear
 - 2. Physical contact with the perpetrator
 - 3. Physical restraint
 - 4. Feeling trapped
 - iii. Physical sensations and symptoms:

1. Inability to speak or move
 2. Exhibiting general loss of muscle tone
 3. Victim may describe the experience as “blacking out,” which differs from blackouts caused by intoxicants.
- iv. This survival reflex may make it easier for the perpetrator to commit the assault.
1. The victim’s physical response might be misconstrued as consent, by the perpetrator and by various parties such as investigators, prosecutors, jurors, etc.

2.5 Identify self-protection habits in response to trauma.

- A. Victims may use habitual behaviors to cope with being sexually assaulted.
- i. Polite and passive habits learned to resist unwanted sexual advances without causing a scene.
 - ii. When fear kicks in, a habit developed by surviving a previous trauma activates to survive the current trauma.
- B. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- i. ACEs are difficult situations children face or witness before they develop effective coping skills.
 - ii. ACEs can highly influence how the victim responds to trauma, even as an adult.
 1. Childhood sexual abuse could result in a habitual response of dissociating or entering a state of tonic or collapsed immobility.
 2. Witnessing domestic violence could result in a habit of becoming incredibly quiet or even “invisible.”
 3. Frequently being required to as a peacekeeper in the family could lead to doing whatever necessary to avoid conflicts.
 - iii. ACEs are associated with a higher likelihood of complex trauma symptoms.
 1. Initial traumatic experiences can result in:
 - a. Emotional dysregulation
 - b. Loss of a sense of security
 - c. Loss of direction
 - d. Inability to detect or respond to danger cues
 - e. Often leads to subsequent trauma exposure.
- C. Habitual speech patterns
- i. When logic and speech planning are disrupted, victims may resort to ingrained speech habits during a sexual assault.

- ii. Typically, these patterns do not involve verbal protests or explicit boundary setting.
- iii. They may not be able to make clear statements such as, “stop, you’re hurting me” or “no, I told you I don’t want to.”
- iv. While the prefrontal cortex is impaired, the victim may only be able to express simple statements during the sexual assault such as “no” or “stop.”

2.6 Identify how trauma responses affect attention and memory.

A. Top-down processing:

- i. Prefrontal cortex is fully functioning when there is no threat.
- ii. The ability to control where to focus attention and make logical decisions.

B. Bottom-up focus:

- i. Prefrontal cortex becomes impaired when there is a threat.
- ii. Attention focuses directly on surviving or coping with the threat.
 - 1. Central details come from where attention is directed during an event.
 - a. Often the focus is on what is needed to survive.
 - b. Details are likely to imprint into memory.
 - c. Details are sensory-based such as smells, sounds, and visual details.
 - 2. Peripheral details are details surrounding an event.
 - a. May not seem important or significant.
 - b. May or may not be remembered, not central to the experience.
 - c. Some examples include what the perpetrator looked like, what they were wearing, the time it started, and duration of the assault.

C. Weapon focus:

- i. The victim’s attention is focused on the weapon which becomes a central detail.
- ii. Victim may not remember peripheral details of the incident, focusing on the weapon was crucial for survival.

D. Memory recall

- i. Victims may recall memories from an assault immediately or may not recall details until a later point in time.
- ii. Memories are often fragmented.
- iii. Characteristics of fragmented memories may include:
 - 1. Some details may be burned into memory while others are missing.
 - 2. Sensory details such as taste, smell, sound, touch, and/or visual details.

3. May or may not recall contextual details such as time or sequence.
4. Inconsistent memories—a victim may not recall the details or answer given to a previously asked question.
5. Memories are not stored in a narrative manner.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: It is important for instructors to make sure learners understand fragmented information or inconsistency in details do not mean a victim is being untruthful. With a trauma-informed approach, law enforcement and victims can piece together information about the assault.

See Appendix B for more resources.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Instructor must have learners complete an activity to identify and differentiate central, peripheral, and weapon focus details. Being able to identify types of focus details is essential to understanding how to appropriately respond to a victim's statement.

2.7 Identify how people react to trauma differently.

- A. There is not one way or one correct way to react to trauma.
- B. Victims may show a vast range of emotions or lack of emotions after a sexual assault, such as:
 - i. Apathy
 - ii. Flat demeanor
 - iii. Laughter
 - iv. Anger
 - v. Appearing distant
 - vi. Crying
 - vii. Wringing of hands
 - viii. Avoiding eye contact
- C. Some may not have had their memory affected by trauma and may remember all the events related to the sexual assault.
- D. It is important not to retraumatize a sexual assault victim while performing law enforcement duties.
- E. It is important to understand how the power dynamics of an officer and victim can mirror a perpetrator and a victim.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY: Have learners think back to the biases they discussed from Unit 1, and now what they have learned about trauma responses. Then, have them apply the information they have learned which contradicts those biases.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Show learners the following video of an officer recalling a critical incident which illustrates the impact of trauma and memory after a traumatic event:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ251pv1GzA>

Ask learners to share their observations of the video regarding the biases discussed earlier, the knowledge of how the brain protects the body in trauma, and other common trauma responses.

It is suggested the instructor emphasize how the officer in the video describes the help he received from a fellow officer and its lasting effect. Engage with learners about how they respond to victims is equally impactful and important.

Unit 3 Trauma-Informed Approach

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Using what was learned about how trauma affects different parts of the brain and how it may affect the victim’s attention and behaviors, this unit teaches best practices for responding using a trauma-informed approach.

Always follow agency or department protocol for standard sexual assault incident response.

The term victim is used here to also refer to victims’ caregivers and guardians, as they will also be working closely with law enforcement on making decisions on behalf of the victim.

The victim should always be treated with empathy, compassion, and respect. The first interaction with law enforcement has a large effect on the victim’s recovery, as well as participation and engagement in the criminal justice system.

See Appendix C for trauma-informed resources which focus on specific steps of the sexual assault investigative process and interview techniques.

3.1 Define trauma-informed approach.

- A. A trauma-informed approach begins with understanding the physical, social, psychological, and emotional impact of trauma on the individual, loved ones, as well as on the professionals who help them.
- B. Individuals, groups, organizations, and systems can all be trauma-informed.
- C. The approach incorporates four (4) key assumptions, the “4Rs”, which must be incorporated into investigation and victim assistance practices.
 - i. Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths to recovery.
 - ii. Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, loved ones, staff, self, and others.
 - iii. Respond by fully integrating knowledge of trauma into policies, procedures, and practices.
 - iv. Resist re-traumatization actively through trauma-informed and compassionate responses.

3.2 Indicate trauma-informed best practices for victims of all ages.

- A. Initiating an investigative interview with an adult:
 - i. Follow agency protocol regarding victim referral to investigators to conduct an investigative interview.
 - ii. Offer an advocate before an investigative interview.
 - 1. The goal is to avoid repeated interviews and the potential for re-traumatization.
 - iii. Do not require or suggest the victim complete a written statement.
 - 1. Use audio/video recording if possible and explain why.
 - 2. Inconsistencies between an interview and written statement may be used against the victim by defense.
- B. First responders making initial contact with child victims should refrain from interviewing the child.
 - i. Officers should be aware some children fear all adults because of their experience with adults.
 - ii. Some children may fear law enforcement because of family biases or their culture. An officer being in uniform sometimes heightens this fear.
 - iii. Officers are encouraged to contact the local Children’s Advocacy Center to arrange for a forensic child interview and coordinate with the multidisciplinary team response.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Inform learners adopting a trauma-informed approach is not accomplished through any particular technique. A trauma-informed approach requires consistent awareness and sensitivity. By adopting trauma-informed responses, learners can positively impact reporting, investigation, and prosecution experiences for victims and make their community safer.

3.3 Indicate the six key principles of a trauma-informed approach.

- A. Incorporating a trauma-informed approach into officers' daily work takes into consideration the following six key principles:
 - i. Safety
 - 1. Ensure immediate safety and address any medical concerns.
 - 2. If there are severe injuries, call emergency services.
 - 3. Address fear and safety concerns on the front end.
 - a. For example, asking the victim their preferred method of communication may increase their likelihood to engage in next steps, as they may be worried the perpetrator has access to their phone.

4. Conduct conversations and interviews in a place which feels safe and private to the victim.
 5. Be patient.
 6. Give the victim time to process and work through the trauma during all interactions.
 7. Do not threaten victims with prosecution for false reporting or infer in any way they are being untruthful.
 8. Meet victim's basic and special needs, such as thirst, warmth, and mobility limitations.
- ii. Trustworthiness and transparency
1. Provide accurate information.
 - a. If unsure of the appropriate information, do not fabricate an answer.
 - b. If an answer is not available at the time, follow up with the information.
 2. Prepare victim with what to expect:
 - a. Who will follow up with the victim and how they will make contact.
 - b. What to do if contacted by the suspect, or friend or family member of the suspect.
 - c. Officer's contact information and case number.
 - d. Ensure the victim understands they may contact the investigator with additional details later.
 - This will alleviate the urge to fill in the missing blanks they do not recall at this time.
 3. Be mindful of any commitments made to the victim.
 - a. If unable to follow through, communicate this clearly to the victim, along with the reasons why.
 4. Respond to all communication from the victim in a timely manner.
 5. Throughout the process, check in with the victim even if there is no information to share. This will assist in keeping them engaged in the process.
- iii. Peer support
1. Facilitate access to victim assistance support throughout the process.
- iv. Collaboration and mutuality
1. Be familiar with resources available to the victim and family and provide this information to them.

2. Active participation with local Children’s Advocacy Centers, Multidisciplinary Teams, and Sexual Assault Response Teams is encouraged.
 3. Remain current on both trauma-informed approach and criminal investigative techniques for collecting victims’ testimony.
 4. Review departmental standard operating procedures regarding sexual assault response.
- v. Empowerment, voice, and choice
1. Respect the individual’s choices and preferences.
 2. Allow the victim to have a voice in their treatment and support services.
 - a. Do not, at any time, pressure the victim to participate in the investigation or prosecution of the assault.
 3. Remind the victim it is always their choice to have an advocate present during any part of the criminal process.
 4. Offer language services, as appropriate.
 - a. Use a professional or agency translator to ensure language is translated verbatim and not sanitized.
 - b. Do not use a family member or friend as a translator.
 5. Allow the victim to make choices regarding Interview time, location, and breaks.
 6. Provide all mandated victim notifications, along with applicable resources from law enforcement partners.
 7. Unless appropriate, do not seize the victim’s phone.
 - a. Use less intrusive methods to collect potential pertinent electronic evidence with the victim’s consent.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Victim rights and types of advocates will be covered in depth in Unit 4.

- vi. Cultural, historical, and gender issues
1. Recognize and address cultural, historical, and gender-related factors which can influence a survivor's experience of trauma and their process of healing.
 2. Remain objective by identifying any personal or professional biases you may have with adult or child sexual assault cases.

3.4 Indicate trauma-informed best practices for child victims.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: While the best practices listed below focus on the circumstances revolving child victims, ensure learners understand the ones covered in the learning objective above also apply to them.

- A. Do not attempt to force a disclosure or continue an interview when a child becomes overly distressed.
 - i. This may revictimize the child.
 - ii. Nearly 80% of child victims of sexual assault initially deny abuse or hesitate to share.
 - iii. Nearly 75% of child victims of sexual assault disclose by accident.
 - iv. Most children are abused by someone they know and trust, leading to complex emotions about revealing the abuse.
 - v. Children who are severely traumatized may benefit from additional support and multiple, nonduplicative interview sessions.
- B. Build rapport with the victim by engaging in brief conversation about their interests or activities.
- C. Use caution when providing information to the victim's family as they may share it with others.
- D. Schedule a forensic interview with a trained professional whenever possible.
- E. Keep the holistic well-being of the child in mind when considering child removal procedures.

3.5 Indicate appropriate language when interviewing victims.

- A. Appropriate language will vary for each person and should be adjusted based on factors such as:
 - i. Age
 - ii. Individual developmental abilities
 - iii. Delayed outcry
 - iv. Internal and external blocks to disclosure
- B. Avoid victim blaming language such as:
 - i. "Allegedly" or "alleged"
 - ii. "Their story"
 - iii. "Supposedly"
 - iv. "Lying"
- C. Use non-verbal communication to put the victim at ease.
 - i. Open body language
 - ii. Uncrossed arms
 - iii. Maintain appropriate eye contact.

- iv. Face toward the person.
 - v. Pay attention to tone of voice.
 - vi. Respect the individual's personal space.
 - vii. When officers maintain a calm demeanor, it often leads to a mutual sense of calmness in the people with whom they interact.
 - viii. Always be mindful and respectful of other people.
- D. Use verbal communication to put the victim at ease.
- i. Do not interrupt the victim while speaking.
 - ii. Small talk allows for learning speech patterns and level of vocabulary of the individual.
 - iii. Use clear and concise language.
 - iv. Reiterate to the victim it is okay not to know the answers to all the questions.
 - 1. The victim should not guess if they do not know the answer.
- E. Because trauma affects the way memories are encoded, the victim may not recall the incident chronologically.
- i. Focus on what the victim can remember about their experience and build on what the victim recalls.
 - ii. Use open-ended questions to help the victim's brain retrieve information from a traumatic event and offer them more control.
 - 1. Avoid prompts such as "Start at the beginning and tell me what happened."
- F. Avoid asking "why" questions.
- i. These can be perceived as blaming the victim instead of an establishment of a crime being committed, a need for evidence, or identification of the suspect.
 - ii. Instead, tell the victim why the question is being asked and ask in a non-judgmental way.
 - 1. Example: "Tell me about the conditions that prevented you from leaving or escaping" instead of "Why didn't you leave?"
- G. Ask questions about what they thought, felt, feared, saw, smelled, tasted, heard, or touched during the incident.
- i. The brain stores experiential memories when experiencing trauma.
 - 1. Example: "Do you remember smelling anything? What do you recall hearing? What do you remember feeling physically?"
- H. Do not ask questions which imply the incident could not be a sexual assault if there were prior consensual sexual acts.

- i. Example: Instead of “Have you had sex with this person before?” try “Has this person done anything like this to you in the past?”

3.6 Identify appropriate language when interviewing child victims.

- A. Age-appropriate language will vary child to child.
- B. Officers should adapt their language to the individual child.
 - i. A three (3) year old will not be able to understand or communicate in the same manner as a sixteen (16) year old
- C. Concepts of numbers and time develop gradually and are difficult for young children to understand and use accurately.
 - i. Children between the ages of four (4) and eleven (11) are still learning the concepts of past, present, and future.
 - ii. Discrepancies regarding time in a story are not indicators a child is lying.
- D. Listen and clarify the child’s meaning and understanding of words throughout the interaction.
 - i. Language is acquired gradually and unevenly, therefore just because a child uses a word does not imply their understanding of its meaning.
- E. For younger children:
 - i. Avoid technical language and use simple words.
 - 1. Example: Instead of “Was there any coercion or force involved?” try “Did anyone try and make you do something you didn’t want to do?”
 - ii. Avoid pronouns and other pointing or shifting words which have no meaning without referring to another part of the conversation, such as “he,” “she,” “there,” or “that.”
 - 1. Whenever possible use people’s names, place names, and specific nouns to avoid confusion.
 - 2. Clarify who or what the child means when such words are used.
 - iii. Physically get down on their level.
 - 1. Do not tower over them as height can be intimidating to small children.
- F. Children thirteen (13) or older should understand concepts such as:
 - i. Who, what, where, and how
 - ii. Chronological narrative
 - iii. Duration
 - iv. Frequency

- G. Watching youth educational programming and utilizing the same vocabulary and speech can help teach age-appropriate language.

3.7 Indicate best practices for trauma-informed report writing.

- A. Refrain from filling any victim statement gaps.
- B. Recreate the reality of the sexual assault from the perspective of the victim.
 - i. Document exact wording.
 - 1. Avoid paraphrasing
 - 2. If the victim uses indirect language, clarify exact meaning with the victim.
 - a. Example: "You said the person groped you 'down there', can you clarify exactly where they touched you?"
 - ii. Do not sanitize statements.
 - 1. This can happen when investigators replace the victim's slang, coarse language, or street language with medical or law enforcement terms.
- C. Documentation of what the victim was thinking and feeling can create record to clarify their behavior.
 - i. Include details about what the victim stated they were thinking and feeling before, during, and after the sexual assault.
 - ii. Victims might act in ways which seem counter-intuitive and respond in ways which may not make sense.
- D. Use language free of interpretation or diagnosis of trauma responses.
 - i. Example: "The victim stated they felt like they froze" instead of "the victim froze."
- E. Include details which establish elements such as premeditation, coercion, threats, force, fear, inability to consent, and grooming.
 - i. While documenting the context of force, threat, and fear are of immense value, many times these factors may not be as obvious in a child sexual assault.
 - 1. Children may not be able to recognize them or put them into words.
 - 2. It is important to document all the grooming tactics used by the alleged perpetrator in the report.
 - 3. Child sexual abuse does not require force, fear, or coercion to be a factor.
- F. Use non-consensual language.
 - i. When appropriate, use legal terms like "rape" or "sexual assault" from the Penal Code.

- ii. Describe the parts of the body and the things the victim was forced to do with those parts of the body.
 - 1. “The victim then said that they begged the perpetrator to stop, repeatedly saying, ‘no,’ ‘stop,’ and ‘I don’t want to do this,’ but they kept forcing their tongue inside their genitals anyway.”
- G. Document the victim’s description of what “no” looked like or felt like.
 - i. It may be subtle or overt.
 - ii. Resistance can be communicated in ways other than words, such as:
 - 1. Looking away.
 - 2. Closing eyes.
 - 3. Positioning or moving body.
 - 4. Document victim incapacity to resist perpetrator due to physical ability or response to trauma.
- H. It is important to document whether the victim used drugs or alcohol before or after the sexual assault in a straightforward way.
 - i. Remember, the victim’s use of drugs or alcohol, whether consensual or not, does not mitigate the circumstances of sexual assault.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: The purpose of this activity is to practice trauma-informed documentation for report writing.

Explain to learners they will be provided with different scenarios depicting sexual assault victims sharing their stories. These scenarios can be presented in video, audio, or text format, as chosen by the instructor.

See Appendix C for recommended videos.

Instruct learners to take detailed notes on relevant case information while reviewing the scenarios.

Present learners with examples of victim disclosures. These disclosures may be real or fictitious. They must be relevant to the learners’ service area and include a diverse range of victims, including different genders and age groups.

Have learners review their notes either in groups or as a class discussion, depending on the instructor’s choice. They should then write a summary which follows the best practices covered in section 3.6.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY: The purpose of this activity is to expose learners to trauma-informed language and behavior applied to their roles and responsibilities as law enforcement professionals.

Present learners with scenarios between officers and victims. These scenarios may be real or fictitious and can be in video, audio, or text format. They must be relevant to the learners' service area and include a diverse range of victims, including different genders and age groups.

Have learners identify and explain best practices and worst practices observed, using the group format chosen by the instructor.

Have learners discuss recommendations for improving interactions in line with trauma-informed principles.

Have learners reflect and share with the class what best practices they would like to adopt in their daily practices when interacting with victims.

Unit 4 Advocacy and Procedures

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Resources for victim advocacy, support, and more Unit 4 information can be found in Appendix D.

4.1 Identify agency's protocol for sexual assault.

- A. Agencies may have different protocols to follow for responding to and investigating cases of sexual assault.
- B. Law enforcement can implement the trauma-informed approach regardless of an agency's process.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY: Have learners identify their agency's protocol for handling sexual assault cases, reflect on how trauma-informed practices can be applied regardless of the protocol, and recognize the importance of these practices in supporting victims effectively. If learners are from different agencies, have learners identify the sexual assault protocol for their respective agencies, if available.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: See Appendix D for a model policy established by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

4.2 Identify legislation regarding victim rights.

- A. Notification of Rights - Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.401
- B. Duties of Peace Officers Regarding Victims of Sexual Assault § 56A.403
- C. Presence of Sexual Assault Program Advocate - Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.3515
- D. Additional Rights of Victims of Sexual Assault - Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.052
- E. Designation of Pseudonym - Code of Criminal Procedure § 58.102
- F. Victim Information Confidential - Code of Criminal Procedure § 58.103
- G. Magistrate's Order for Emergency Protection- Code of Criminal Procedure § 17.292

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

The purpose of this activity is to encourage learners to review and understand victim information and rights packets.

Beyond viewing them as mere paperwork, explain packets contain important information about victims' rights and available resources. Emphasize understanding these packets is crucial for providing proper support to victims and ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

Distribute the sample packets to each learner.

Briefly review the contents of the packets, highlighting key sections such as victims' rights, available services, and contact information for support organizations.

Ask learners to read through the packets, focusing on the following:

- Identify and summarize the key rights of victims listed in the packets.
- Locate at least three services or resources mentioned available to victims.
- Note any procedures or requirements for victims to access these resources.

4.3 Identify best practices for offering the victim a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE).

A. Offer a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE)

- i. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.303
- ii. Health and Safety Code § 323.053

B. Explain the health and evidence collection benefits of a forensic medical exam.

- i. Inform the victim there is no cost for the forensic portion of the examination.
 1. The victim may be billed for costs related to medical care and may apply for the Crime Victims' Compensation program for assistance.
 - a. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.304
 - ii. If the victim declines the forensic medical exam, provide information about where the victim may obtain the exam later.
 1. An adult victim has a legal right to obtain an exam within 120 hours of assault.
 - a. Evidence may still be available beyond 120 hours, and there may be good reason to conduct an exam after that time period.
 2. Law enforcement shall refer a child victim of sexual assault for a medical examination regardless of when the abuse is reported.
 - a. Most child sexual abuse exams are not conducted within 120 hours because children often do not disclose the abuse within 120 hours.
 - b. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.303 (b-1)
 3. Every incident should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

iii. If the victim is indecisive about reporting the sexual assault but they consent to proceed with a forensic medical exam, the exam evidence will be kept for five years. The victim may still choose to report the assault after the five-year deadline, even if the kit is no longer available.

1. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.306

iv. Preserve evidence by encouraging the victim not to eat, drink, shower, use the restroom, brush teeth, or remove clothing before the exam.

4.4 Identify the purpose of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).

- A. Each county or multicounty response team develops a collaborative response protocol to assist the victim of a sexual assault such as:
- i. Investigating and prosecuting cases.
 - ii. Interagency sharing of information.
 - iii. Location and accessibility of Sexual Assault Forensic Medical Exams (SAFE).
 - iv. Information to access medical care.
 - v. Ensuring an advocate is offered to victims.
 - vi. Information regarding access to mental and behavioral health services.
 - vii. Notifying survivors of status of any criminal case and court proceedings.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Review agency policy and procedures and SART protocol for reporting sexual assaults, informing victims of their rights, sexual assault programs in the area, and notifying advocates. For more information about SART, see:

- Local Government Code § 351.251
- Local Government Code § 351.252
- Local Government Code § 351.256

Co-teaching this section with member(s) of the local SART team allows collaboration and familiarity between law enforcement, community members, and prosecutors, and demonstrates how they can work together to offer the best services to the victim.

4.5 Identify how the SART benefits the victim and the criminal justice process.

- A. Provide a victim-centered, trauma-informed, multidisciplinary approach to sexual assault victim response.
- B. Benefits of a SART include, but are not limited to:
- i. Coordination and collaboration between all agencies involved in sexual assault cases.
 - ii. Higher rates of reporting sexual assault to law enforcement.
 - iii. Higher rates of using health care services.

- iv. Less secondary victimization from service providers.
 - v. Increased prosecution rates.
 - vi. Collaborative efforts in convicting perpetrators.
 - vii. Victim feeling supported throughout the reporting and investigation processes.
- C. SARTs work together, make appropriate referrals, and build trust with victims.

4.6 Identify benefits of Children's Advocacy Centers in child sexual abuse cases.

- A. Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) provide services to child abuse victims and their families.
- i. Forensic interviews
 - ii. Mental health services
 - iii. Medical services
 - iv. Victim and family advocacy
- B. CACs employ a multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach to abuse investigations.
- i. An MDT is a group of professionals from distinct disciplines which collaborate at the time of the report and throughout victim's involvement with the CAC.
 - ii. MDTs include representation from:
 - 1. Law enforcement
 - 2. Department of Family and Protective Services
 - 3. Medical professionals
 - 4. Prosecution
 - 5. Forensic interviewers
 - 6. CAC staff
 - iii. Benefits of using the CAC's multidisciplinary teams approach include:
 - 1. Facilitates coordination and communication.
 - 2. Better collaboration and information sharing.
 - 3. Better synchronization in joint investigations of child abuse.
 - 4. Reduces trauma.
 - 5. Provides better services
 - 6. Gives child access to all CAC services.
 - iv. Family Code § 264.4061

4.7 Identify types of sexual assault advocates.

- A. Community-based advocates:
 - i. Offers confidentiality of communication between advocate and victim.
 - ii. Specially trained in crisis intervention and sexual assault counseling.
- B. System-based advocates:
 - i. Usually do not qualify to provide counseling.
 - ii. Do not have confidentiality privileges.
- C. Types of sexual assault advocates include:
 - i. Sexual Assault Program (SAP) advocate:
 - 1. Community-based advocate who has completed a sexual assault training program certified by the attorney general.
 - 2. Works in a private agency within the community.
 - 3. The first advocate offered to a victim.
 - ii. Crime Victim Liaison (CVL):
 - 1. System-based advocate employed with a law enforcement agency.
 - 2. Has received the approved attorney general's training.
 - 3. Used as a secondary source if SAP advocate is unavailable.
 - iii. Victim Assistance Counselor (VAC):
 - 1. Either a system-based victim assistance coordinator or a system-based victim assistance counselor.
 - 2. Used as a secondary source if an SAP is unavailable.
- D. Sexual Assault Training Program (SATP):
 - i. Program certified by the Office of Attorney General involving classroom and on the job training by a sexual assault program (SAP).
 - ii. If there are no SAPs, CVLs, or VACs available, a peace officer who has completed the SATP may be offered.
- E. Some advocates are specifically trained to work with child victims.
 - i. Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) Family Advocate:
 - 1. A CAC Family Advocate acts as a liaison between CAC staff and victim's family.
 - ii. Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Advocate:
 - 1. Community-based advocate.
 - 2. Specially trained in supporting commercially sexually exploited youth and victims of child sex trafficking.

iii. Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA):

1. Specially trained in supporting children in the foster care system.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) created the Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors as a searchable service provider directory. The link for this resource is available in Appendix D.

This directory is searchable by organization name, services, city, and county. Search results may include local and statewide service providers.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

Walk through a sample search on the SASTF directory website from Appendix D. Use various criteria including organization name, services, city, and county.

Find local service providers offering various things such as legal assistance, therapy, advocacy, etc.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

Advocates are an excellent source of information and support for victims of sexual assault, but there are other resources which may be helpful for victims. The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) National Sexual Assault Hotline (<https://ohl.rainn.org/online/> or 1-800-656-HOPE) is a confidential hotline which offers support, information, advice, or a referral from trained support specialists.

APPENDIX A

Statistics:

Bureau of Justice Statistics – Crime Against Persons with Disabilities, 2009 – 2019 – Statistical Tables: Data for persons with disabilities who have been victimized by violent crimes. The paper lists the rate of victimization by type of crime and disability status, the percent of violent victimizations against persons with disabilities by type of crime, the violent crime reported to police by victim’s disability status and disability type for 2017–2019, and more. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/capd0919st.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Department of Defense – Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military Fiscal Year 2022: Statistics on the rate of sexual assault in the military from October 1st, 2021 to September 30th, 2022. The report notes “No sexual assault prevalence survey for the active force was required or conducted this year. The next sexual assault prevalence survey of military members is planned for Fiscal Year 2023.” https://www.sapr.mil/sites/default/files/public/docs/reports/AR/FY22/DOD_Annual_Report_on_Sexual_Assault_in_the_Military_FY2022.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

International Association of Chiefs of

– Responding to Sexual Violence in LGBTQ+ Communities: Report on the instances of sexual and domestic violence in LGBTQ+ communities and how it is affected by police bias when it comes to responses to LGBTQ+ victims. It details statistics, challenges to reporting, and policies and procedures. <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/all/i-iacprespondingtosexualviolenceinlgbtqcommunities2017.pdf> (last accessed September 26, 2023).

National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2015 Data Brief – Updated Release: Survey containing statistical data on sexual violence and intimate partner violence on a national level. It includes data on the sexual violence of men and women, as well as information on stalking and intimate partner violence. <https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2015data-brief508.pdf> (last accessed September 26, 2023).

National Sexual Violence Resource Center – Statistics of Sexual Violence (Graphics) and Statistics in Depth: <https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics> ; <https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics/statistics-depth>

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network – Statistics Main Page and Graphic Statistics with the Criminal Justice System: <https://www.rainn.org/statistics> (last accessed September 27, 2023); <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/criminal-justice-system> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network – Victims of Sexual Violence: Statistics: A web page listing the statistics of victims of sexual violence on a national level. Discusses the groups most susceptible to sexual violence, and the long-term effects it can have on victims.

<https://www.rainn.org/statistics/victims-sexual-violence> (last accessed September 26, 2023).

Infographics and Printable(s):

CDC: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control – STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence: A compilation with strategies to use when preventing sexual violence; the package lists information about how sexual violence starts, what it is associated with, how society perpetuates it, and the steps one can take to prevent it.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sv-prevention-technical-package.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: Printable infographics about the cost and prevalence of sexual assault in Texas, comparisons between 2003 and 2015 prevalence, and information on the types of perpetrators, weapons used, and alcohol and drug use at time of sexual assault. <https://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/files/2019/03/TX-SA-Prevalence-Study-Infographic.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

International Association of Chiefs of Police – Addressing and Preventing Gender Bias Infographic: An infographic given by the International Association of Chiefs of Police addressing the number of ways biases and outdated stereotypes undermine police efforts in responding to sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. The infographic is available in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.

<https://www.theiacp.org/resources/document/addressing-and-preventing-gender-bias-infographic> (last accessed September 26, 2023).

National Sexual Violence Resource Center—Info and Stats for Journalists: Statistics About Sexual Assault Infographic: An infographic listing some general statistics about sexual abuse/sexual violence, child sexual abuse, campus sexual assault, and crime reporting on a national level.

https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_media_packet_statistics-about-sexual-violence_0.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

National Sexual Violence Resource Center: An infographic giving an overview about the misconceptions which come with the notion of “false reporting.” Explains what a false report, a baseless report, and an unsubstantiated report is.

https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Overview_False-Reporting.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative – Trauma-Informed Communication: An infographic about Trauma- Informed Communication, and what one can expect when interacting with victims of sexual assault and trauma. <https://sakitta.org/toolkit/docs/Trauma-Informed-Communication-Pamphlet.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault: A pamphlet guide for law enforcement listing some underserved groups of society and the barriers they face when trying to report on sexual assault and sexual violence. https://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BR_EliminatingBarrier_2015.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Interactives:

Adult Protective Services Investigations – Types of Abuse: An interactive web page allowing the user to search and configure data on the different types of abuse reported across Texas. The data is split by region and covers all counties across Texas.

https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About_DFPS/Data_Book/Adult_Protective_Services/Investigations

[/Types_of_Abuse.asp](#) (last accessed September 26, 2023).

The State of Texas State Auditor—Interactive Map: Survey Respondents and Sexual Assault Crime Data by County—An interactive map navigable by clicking a selected county to see respondents to the SAO survey and sexual assault crime data in said county.

<https://sao.texas.gov/Reports/Rider5/21-303/InteractiveMap.html> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

More Information:

Center for Disease Control & Prevention – The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS)—A webpage providing an overview of the NISVS and various related resources. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nisvs/index.html> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Department of Protective Services—A webpage by DPS providing reports for various crimes in Texas including sexual assault and family violence.

<https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/crime-records/crime-texas> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Georgetown Law—Myths and Facts about Sexual Violence—A website listing some of the “myths and facts” about sexual violence. It reflects on the barriers to reporting and how bias can be detrimental to a victim’s confidence in coming forward.

<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/your-life-career/health-fitness/sexual-assault-relationship-violence-services/myths-and-facts-about-sexual-violence/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) – About Sexual Assault—A web page to access more information about sexual assault within the United States, the types of sexual assault, the effects of sexual violence, understanding consent, and the statutes of limitations.

<https://rainn.org/about-sexual-assault> (last accessed September 26, 2023).

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) – Barriers to Reporting Sexual Violence in LGBTQ Communities: A web page reporting the barriers the LGBTQ+ community faces when reporting on sexual assault/sexual violence.

<https://www.rainn.org/news/barriers-reporting-sexual-violence-lgbtq-communities> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Washington University in St. Louis—Rape Myths and Facts—A webpage from

Washington University in St. Louis identifying false beliefs about rape and sexual assault. <https://students.wustl.edu/rape-myths-facts/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Reports and Written Guides:

American Civil Liberties Union - Responses from the Field: Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, and Policing—Report by the ACLU on police bias and how it affects their inaction, hostility, and dismissiveness towards survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. It also goes into recommendations for police training, changes in culture, and adopting a more collaborative approach with the community.

https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/2015.10.20_report_-_responses_from_the_field.pdf (last accessed September 26, 2023).

Improving Law Enforcement Response to Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence by Identifying and Preventing Gender Bias—A guide by the Department of Justice examining how bias plays a part in law enforcement’s response to sexual assault and domestic violence. The purpose of the guide is to provide a set of basic principles to ensure bias does not undermine these responses by law enforcement. <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/page/file/1509451/download> (last accessed September 27, 2023). <https://www.justice.gov/opa/file/799366/download> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault—Briefing Sheets—A compilation of Compendium of Resources for Sexual Assault (CORSA) briefing sheets intended to advance the use of best practices in sexual assault response by describing several case circumstances faced by law enforcement and their elements.

<https://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/files/2019/04/Final-CORSA-Briefing-Sheets-12.21.18.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

National Sexual Violence Resource Center – Unspoken Crimes: Sexual Assault in Rural America—A booklet discussing various issues of rural sexual assault and examining national sexual assault data from a rural perspective.

https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Booklets_Unspoken-Crimes-Sexual-Assault-in-Rural-America%20.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) – 2016/2017 Report on Sexual Violence—A report summarizing the prevalence of various forms of sexual assault in the United States.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs/nisvsReportonSexualViolence.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Police Executive Research Forum— Practical Approaches for Strengthening Law Enforcement’s Response to Sexual Assault: A guidebook with recommendations for law enforcement on how to improve response to sexual assault. Includes examples from project sites which have implemented such recommendations, and offers additional resources to further guide law enforcement in sexual assault response strategies.

<https://www.policeforum.org/assets/SexualAssaultResponseExecutiveGuidebook.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

The State of Texas State Auditor—An Audit Report on Investigation and Prosecution Processes for Reported Sexual Assaults in Texas: A report identifying some of the leading reasons a reported incident of sexual assault may not lead to an arrest of a suspect or prosecution of an offender. <https://sao.texas.gov/reports/main/21-002.pdf> (last accessed

September 27, 2023).

Videos:

SAFVIC System— Implicit Bias (10 mins):

https://vimeo.com/503125544/9ae2d509da?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=86621986 (last accessed September 27, 2023).

APPENDIX B

Reports and Written Guides:

Brigham Young University –The Science of Neurobiology of Sexual Assault Trauma and the Utah Legal System: A research paper with information on the ways a person’s body can respond in moments of panic, and when undergoing a traumatic incident. The paper details the neurological responses of the brain during and after the traumatic event (in this case, sexual assault). Covers tonic immobility, poor memory encoding, decreased executive level cognitive thinking, and decreased feelings of consciousness.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6121&context=facpub> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Scenarios:

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative – Trauma-Informed Interview Roleplay Scenario: A one-page document of a role play scenario; it includes the detective’s investigative report and the patient’s description of the sexual assault.

<https://www.sakitta.org/toolkit/docs/Trauma-Informed-Interview-Role-Play-Scenario.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Videos:

Dr. Rebecca Campbell — The Neurobiology of Trauma: Webinar Series:

“Psychology professor Dr. Rebecca Campbell explains the neurobiology of sexual assault trauma. The presentations discuss the body and brain response to trauma, implications for improved response to sexual assault, how victims behave during and after an assault, how trauma affects memory formation and recall during and immediately after an assault, and application of knowledge of the body and brain response to trauma in cold case investigations and victim notification.”

<https://sakitta.org/toolkit/index.cfm?fuseaction=tool&tool=48> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Part 1 (35 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= Fei6CEvzI4> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Part 2 (42 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwnQHvIHOq0> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Part 3 (30 mins): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRYO_RgROgA (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Dr. Rebecca Campbell’s presentation “The World’s Messiest Desk” (7 mins):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdX2E5wArt8> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Dr. James Hopper – Expert Interview - Is there one moment in a sexual assault that investigators should watch for? (3 mins): <https://vimeo.com/249563867> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Dr. James Hopper – Expert Interview - Why Should Law Enforcement Understand Trauma? (2 mins): <https://vimeo.com/249564022> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Dr. Jim Hopper – Neurobiology & Trauma of Sexual Assault (1 hr 48 min): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwTQ_U3p5Wc (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Dr. Jim Hopper – Sexual Assault & the Brain (7 mins): <https://jimhopper.com/topics/sexual-assault-and-the-brain/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Dr. David Lisak — Neurobiology of Trauma (35 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=py0mVt2Z7nc> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Michigan Department of Human Services. Sexual Assault: A Trauma Informed Approach to Law Enforcement First Response, Part 1: How a Brain Responds to Trauma (14 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnlXzD2pYSA> (last accessed October 4, 2023).

Russell Strand – Expert Interview - Why Should Law Enforcement Change the Way They Interview? (2 mins): <https://vimeo.com/249563924> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

APPENDIX C

Infographics and Printable(s):

International Association of Chiefs of Police – Successful Trauma Informed Victim Interviewing: A document with examples and suggestions on the ways officers can reframe interview questions to be more trauma informed and provides the rationale for each question’s reframing. <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Final%20Design%20Successful%20Trauma%20Informed%20Victim%20Interviewing.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative – Trauma-Informed Communication: An infographic about Trauma-Informed Communication, and what one can expect when interacting with victims of sexual assault and trauma. <https://sakitta.org/toolkit/docs/Trauma-Informed-Communication-Pamphlet.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – Immediate and delayed reactions to trauma: A list of emotional, behavioral, existential, physical, and cognitive reactions a victim may experience after a traumatic event. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/table/part1_ch3.t1/?report=objectonly (last accessed September 27, 2023).

More Information:

End Violence Against Women International – Resource Library – Trauma Informed Interviewing: A resource library for more information on trauma informed interviewing; it includes articles, reports, guides, and published research papers. https://evawintl.org/resource-library/?sf_s=trauma+informed+interviewing (last accessed October 4, 2023).

Reports and Written Guides:

End Violence Against Women International – Becoming Trauma-Informed: Learning and Appropriately Applying the Neurobiology of Trauma to Victim Interviews: A paper providing information on the neurobiology of trauma, and how its understanding can be applied to improve victim interviewing. It details how traditional ways of interviewing aren’t as effective, and goes into detail about the impacts of trauma-informed approaches to interviewing. https://evawintl.org/wp-content/uploads/2019-12_TB-Becoming-Trauma-Informed-Trauma-to-Victim-Interviews.pdf (last accessed October 4, 2023).

End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) – Effective Report Writing: Using the Language of Non-Consensual Sex: A paper with insight on the language of report writing, and how using the correct language when reporting on sexual assault and violence can improve prosecution successes. The paper also gives techniques on effective report writing, such as using “non-consensual” indicating language and documenting unique factors which affect the victim’s experience, perspective, and response. https://evawintl.org/wp-content/uploads/Module-1_Report-Writing-11-9-2020-1.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) – Interviewing the Victim: Techniques Based on the Realistic Dynamics of Sexual Assault: A paper providing information on interview techniques, some in depth, and some when the victim is unable to participate in the investigation. It expands upon the importance of victim interviews, how to overcome credibility challenges, and conducting initial response/preliminary interviews. https://evawintl.org/wp-content/uploads/Module-6_Interviewing-the-Victim-8.20.2020.pdf

End Violence Against Women International – Trauma-Informed Interviewing and the Criminal Sexual Assault Case: Where Investigative Technique Meets Evidentiary Value: A paper underlining the different ways trauma informed investigative techniques and interviews can be used in a legal setting as evidence. The paper details the differences between direct and circumstantial evidence, when a victim or an investigator should testify, and what type of information can be gained and be of use when interviewing a victim in a trauma informed manner. https://evawintl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-02_TB-Trauma-Informed-Interviewing-and-the-Criminal-SA-Case-Technique-Meets-Evidentiary-Value.pdf (last accessed October 4, 2023).

Dr. Haskell and Dr. Randall – The Impact of Trauma on Adult Sexual Assault Victims: An in-depth report on the impact of trauma on adult sexual assault victims. The report splits into four parts; the traumatic impact on victims, the neurobiological impact of trauma on victims, how trauma affects memory recall, and why there should be a more trauma informed criminal justice system. https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/trauma/trauma_eng.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

International Association of Chiefs of Police – Sexual Assault Incident Reports: A packet with investigative strategies and guidelines law enforcement may use to improve their interviewing techniques regarding sexual assault incidences. It holds information on report writing, victim interviewing, and suspect interrogation. <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/all/s/SexualAssaultGuidelines.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Catherine Johnson – When Documenting a Sexual Assault, Words Matter: A web article providing seven guidelines officers may use to write better reports on sexual assault; these guidelines include being thorough in describing the details of the sexual assault, using appropriate terminology when writing, and using active versus passive tenses when describing the assault. <https://www.gov1.com/public-safety/articles/when-documenting-a-sexual-assault-words-matter-1u0plr7arbFRvulw/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Office of the Texas Governor Sexual Assault Survivors’ Task Force (SASTF) – First Responder Guide – Sexual Assault: A guide for first responders to use when conducting trauma-informed initial interactions with an adult sexual assault victim. It goes into a step-by-step format and breaks down what to do in each situation at the initial interaction stage in a trauma-informed, victim-centered way. https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/criminal-justice/LE_SA_Protocol_Guide_digital_1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1_MOZu3v6xVQeOXeTLPkHmr2mqBiTXNK71-7OzDM2wtrhm-ZjZnUt7K8k (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Office of the Texas Governor Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) - Your Rights as a Survivor: A guide detailing an individual's rights as a survivor of sexual assault within the state of Texas. Lists the Texas codes within the guide and what an individual is afforded at each step of the investigative process and after the traumatic event.

https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/organization/criminal-justice/RAAS-Adult_Guide_digital_2.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Police Executive Research Forum— Practical Approaches for Strengthening Law Enforcement's Response to Sexual Assault: A guidebook providing recommendations for law enforcement on how to improve response to sexual assault, including examples from project sites which have implemented such recommendations, and offers additional resources to further guide law enforcement in sexual assault response strategies.

<https://www.policeforum.org/assets/SexualAssaultResponseExecutiveGuidebook.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Reveal – 'If the Police Don't Believe You, They Might Prosecute You': How Officers Turn Victims of Sexual Assault Into Suspects: A journalistic web article writing about incidents where law enforcement officers use interrogation techniques meant for suspects of crimes on victims of sexual assault when interviewing them. Provides information on how often law enforcement are critical of acquaintance-rape cases and how a lack of trauma-informed training can lead to worse outcomes of re-traumatization towards the victim. <https://revealnews.org/article/if-the-police-dont-believe-you-they-might-prosecute-you-how-officers-turn-victims-of-sexual-assault-into-suspects/> (last accessed October 4, 2023).

Russell Strand – The Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI): A paper on forensic experiential trauma interviewing techniques, and their efficacy on victim, witness, and suspect/subject interviews. The technique is described as an "opportunity for the victim to describe the experience of the sexual assault or other traumatic and/or fear producing event, physically and emotionally." <http://www.azcvns.net/wp-content/uploads/FETI-Public-Description-Jan-2017.pdf> (last accessed October 5, 2023).

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach: A written guide going into detail about the concept of trauma, trauma-informed approaches, and trauma in the context of community. Some points of information cover how survivors of trauma extensively document their paths to recovery, the four "R's" of a trauma-informed approach, and the six key principles of a trauma-informed approach. https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA_Trauma.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Videos:

Dr. James Hopper – Expert Interview - Are there suggestions on how to interact with victims in a way that helps them feel supported? (2 mins): <https://vimeo.com/249568547> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Faugno & Holbrook – Expert Interview - What Law Enforcement Professionals need to know about Forensic Exams (7 mins): <https://vimeo.com/253494603> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

I Was Hurt By Someone I Thought I Could Trust (4 mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acG4NEzdDvI> (last accessed July 29, 2024).

Interviewing Children (51mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WICXH-s4tBQ> (last accessed July 29, 2024). For unit 3's report writing suggested activity, refer to the clip from 25:00 to 28:06.

Michigan Department of Human Services — Sexual Assault: A Trauma Informed Approach to Law Enforcement First Response:

Part 2: How a First Responder's initial response to sexual assault determines what happens next in the case; practicing empathy (9 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0Om695cHjg> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

For Full Video (Parts 1 & 2) (23 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtWD1XJrhNo> (last accessed October 4, 2023).

SADVIC Systems – Trauma Informed Interviews (20 mins):
<https://vimeo.com/500183406/8fd2cee0af> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

SAFVIC System – Training Video “Trauma Informed Interviews”:
<https://safvicsystems.org/training-videos/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Survivor Stories: I was sexually groomed and raped at 15 (3 mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNRZljysn6o> (last accessed July 29, 2024).

Survivor Stories: I was a male victim of sexual abuse (3 mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V12yJ4eosTE> (last accessed July 29, 2024).

Survivor Stories: Sexually abused by men she met online since 14 (3 mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcF7-gKJOUM> (last accessed July 29, 2024).

APPENDIX D

Crisis Center Resources:

Raliance Rape Crisis Centers: <https://www.raliance.org/rape-crisis-centers/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) – Crisis Center Locator: <https://taasa.org/crisis-center-locator/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Infographics and Printable(s):

International Association of Chiefs of Police – Model Policy - Response to Victims of Crime: [VictimsPolicy2018.pdf \(theiacp.org\)](https://www.theiacp.org/VictimsPolicy2018.pdf) (last accessed August 2nd, 20204)

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) –Self Care After Trauma: A one-page printable on how an individual can practice self-care after a traumatic event. Covers physical and emotional self-care with questions to guide the individual into practicing. <https://www.rainn.org/sites/default/files/SelfCareOnePageRAINN.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault – A Guide for Survivors of Sexual Assault: A written guide for victims of sexual assault to refer to. It covers their rights as victims under the Texas code, what happens when they report, and the aftermath of the assault before and/or after court involvement. https://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/BK_TAASA-Survivor-Booklet-2014.pdf (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Texas Health and Human Services – Information for Survivors of Sexual Assault: A printable with compressed information for victims of sexual assault. It covers informed consent, the sexual assault exam (medical and forensic), and costs or payments. <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/facilities-regulation/hospitals/hospital-sex-assault-info-sheet.pdf> (last accessed October 4, 2023).

Texas Health and Human Services – Information for Survivors of Sexual Assault Non-SAFE-Ready Facility: A printable with compressed information for victims of sexual assault, including details on a SAFE-ready facility. The information notes a victim may still receive a forensic examination for sexual assault at a non-SAFE-ready facility. However, the person conducting the examination may not be a SANE nor a certified sexual assault examiner. <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/sa-survivor-non-safe-facility-info.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

More Information on Support Services:

Attorney General of Texas – Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors: The Sexual Assault Survivors’ Task Force (SASTF) created the Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors as a searchable service provider directory for survivors across Texas.

[Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors | Sexual Assault Survivors Task Force | Office of the Texas Governor | Greg Abbott](#) (last accessed 8/2/2024)

Attorney General of Texas – Crime Victims: A web page with common questions and resources for victims of crime. Includes information on crime victim compensation and services. <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/crime-victims> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

End Violence Against Women International – Advocacy – Benefits of Advocate: Webpage listing the benefits of having an advocate present during a medical forensic examination or law enforcement interview. Includes statistics. https://evawintl.org/best_practice_faqs/advocacy-benefits-of-advocate/ (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) – National Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors and their Loved Ones: Webpage listing national resources for victims of sexual assault to use. Includes links to the National Sexual Assault Hotline, the National Center for Victims of Crime, the National Street Harassment Hotline, and more. <https://www.rainn.org/national-resources-sexual-assault-survivors-and-their-loved-ones> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Sexual Assault Kit Initiative – What Happens Next? Resources for Support, Questions, and Information: A packet of information an individual can use to understand what may come next after a traumatic event such as a sexual assault. Includes details on the medical exam, the SAFE kit exam, the law enforcement process, and more. <https://www.sakitta.org/resources/docs/What%20Happens%20Next%20-%20Resources%20for%20Support,%20Questions%20and%20Information%20Brief%20%20.pdf> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault – Sexual Assault and a Criminal Case: Webpage listing the rights of victims of sexual assault, and rape kit timelines. <https://taasa.org/sexual-assault-criminal-case/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault – Survivor Support: Webpage with printable pamphlets and information regarding survivor support and advocacy. Covers human trafficking, sexual harassment, and healing information for underserved groups such as the LGBTQ+ community. <https://taasa.org/product-category/survivor-support/> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Texas Legal Services Center – Legal Aid for Survivors of Sexual Assault (LASSA): Webpage with information on how to contact LASSA, an organization offering free and confidential legal advice and services by phone to victims of sexual assault. <https://www.tlsc.org/lassa> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

TexasLawHelp.Org – Services and Support for Survivors of Sexual Assault: An article providing resources and general information about what an individual can do if they have been sexually assaulted in Texas. Includes information on the medical exam, the costs, how long one has to report the assault, and more. <https://texaslawhelp.org/article/a-guide-for-survivors-of-sexual->

[assault](#) (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Reports and Written Guides

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