

Instructor Resource Guide



Trauma-Informed Approach to Sexual Assault Investigations

Course ID# 4070

Revised: September 2023

ABSTRACT

Millions of people are sexually assaulted every year, and researchers believe the number of sexual assaults is greatly under reported. This course will educate law enforcement personnel to use a trauma-informed approach when receiving a report of sexual assault. This will help victims be more likely to report sexual assault and engage them in the criminal justice system, as well as begin their healing process, improve investigations that lead to the conviction and prosecution of perpetrators, and ultimately make communities a safer place. Students will learn about the prevalence of and barriers to reporting sexual assault, the basic functions of the brain and how trauma may affect the victim's memory recall and behavior, the benefits of using a trauma-informed approach when conducting and documenting reports of sexual assault, and resources in their community available for sexual assault victims.

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 Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) credit.

- A qualified instructor shall develop the IRG into a lesson plan that meets their organization and student needs.

Please note: It is up to each Academy and/or Training Contractor to create a 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 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.

Student Prerequisites:

- This course is available to all law enforcement professionals.

Instructor Prerequisites:

- 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.

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 course is intended only to instruct learners on a trauma-informed approach to sexual assault victims who are adults. Victims of sexual assault who are children have different legal protections and may require different trauma-informed approaches. Learners who require further training on interacting with sexual assault victims who are children should seek training specific to that topic.

Length of Course:

- 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 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 that promotes education without unnecessarily 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 the course is being taught or, if local statistics are not available, use statistics for a demographically similar area.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY:

- 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, maximize receptiveness, and expand learner's self-reflection and self-awareness.
- At the beginning of the course, spend about 10 minutes discussing implicit biases, especially Just World Bias, and how that may influence how learners may interact with victims in certain ways.
 - This information will be covered in greater detail in later sections.
 - Optional resource: <https://opentextbc.ca/socialpsychology/chapter/biases-in-attribution/>
- Emphasize to learners that 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.

1.1 Identify the prevalence of sexual assault.

- A. Sexual assault occurs in every community.
- B. 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
- C. Reports of sexual assault are under reported.
 - i. Nationally, an estimated two (2) out of three (3) sexual assaults go unreported to law enforcement.
 - 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, 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.

1.2 Identify demographics of sexual assault.

- A. Sexual assault affects every age, gender, sexual orientation, race, occupation, and community.
- B. Some groups are at higher risk for assault.
- C. Individuals can be members of more than one high-risk group.
- D. Individuals from low-risk populations can be victims of sexual assault.
- E. Different groups may have higher or lower rates of sexual assault reports due to reporting barriers specific to that group.
- F. Statistics:
 - i. Community:
 1. Elderly
 2. Immigration status
 3. Non-native English speakers
 4. Rural/suburban/urban
 5. Military, military families, and military veterans
 6. Persons with disabilities
 - Physical
 - Intellectual
 - ii. Race:
 1. Hispanic
 2. White
 3. Black
 4. Asian
 5. Native American
 6. Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
 - iii. Gender:
 1. Men
 2. Women
 3. Transgender and gender non-conforming
 - iv. Sexual orientation:
 1. Bisexual
 2. Gay
 3. Lesbian
 4. Straight

INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

- Use local data to compare reports by specific groups to overall reports.
- 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 come in contact with during their duties. For example, student populations, military bases, colonias, tribal reservations, etc.
- Illustrating the prevalence of sexual assault for specific demographic groups will show learners the need for trauma-informed approaches to sexual assault victims are useful for individual victims, rather than treating all victims the same. 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.

1.3 Identify general barriers to reporting sexual assault.

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.

- A. Victims may not report sexual assault due to a variety of barriers, some general and some specific to their individual community.
- B. A victim may be reluctant to report due to many different barriers. It is important to work towards eliminating as many barriers as possible to allow a victim to report sexual assault.
- C. General barriers:
 - i. Internal:
 1. Feelings of self-blame, shame, guilt, embarrassment, or betrayal of trust.
 2. Victim understanding of what counts as sexual assault may not match their experience.
 3. Fear that others will not believe they could be assaulted due to physical attributes such as:
 - Physical appearance
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Weight
 4. Minimization of the experience.
 5. Not wanting to disclose sexual assault to partner.
 6. Prior consensual and/or marital relationship with perpetrator.
 7. Fear of retaliation by perpetrator.
 8. Fear of loss of home/children.
 9. Financial dependence upon perpetrator.
 10. Not wanting family member or friend to be prosecuted.

- 11. Fear of being arrested/detained – especially for persons who engage in sex work, use of illegal substances, or undocumented immigrants.
- ii. Societal:
 - 1. Fear of being judged.
 - 2. Fear of not being believed.
 - 3. Victim-shaming/Victim-blaming.
 - 4. Fear of isolation.
 - 5. Fear of loss of privacy.
 - 6. Family or community reputation – victims may want to protect family or community members from the “shame” of the assault.
 - 7. Pressure to remain silent to “keep the peace.”
- iii. Systemic:
 - 1. Lack of resources – time, money, childcare, transportation, etc.
 - 2. Fear of nothing being done.
 - 3. Delayed reporting leads to hesitancy to report at all.
 - 4. Fear of investigation failing.
 - 5. Concerns about confidentiality.
 - 6. Invasion of privacy.
 - 7. Distrust of law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
 - 8. Previous negative experiences with law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
- D. These barriers do not negate the fact of a sexual assault and the need for law enforcement response when a sexual assault is reported.

1.4 Identify underserved populations.

- A. Belonging to one or more underserved populations can impact a victim’s likelihood of experiencing a sexual assault, as well as their likelihood of reporting sexual assault to law enforcement.
- B. The United States Code defines "underserved populations" as populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services.
 - i. 34 USC §12291
- C. Populations vary, due in part to:
 - i. Age
 - ii. Ability
 - iii. Gender identity
 - iv. Geographic location
 - v. Housing status
 - vi. Immigration status
 - vii. Language barriers
 - viii. Military service
 - ix. Race and ethnicity
 - x. Religion
 - xi. Sexual orientation

1.5 Identify barriers to reporting sexual assault to law enforcement for specific underserved groups.

- A. Elderly people:
 - i. Fear of loss of independence.
 - ii. May not recognize sexual assault as being an assault.
 - iii. Physical or mental disability.
 - iv. Communication barriers.
 - v. Dependence on abuser for care:
 - 1. Isolation from family/friends/society.
 - 2. Abuser may prevent victim from accessing help by withholding care.
 - 3. Abuser may prevent victim from accessing help by withholding assistive devices.
 - 4. Fear of loss of caregiver/having no one to support them.
 - vi. Not viewed by society as sexual.
 - vii. Lack of transportation.
- B. Persons with disabilities:
 - i. Physical or intellectual disability.
 - ii. Fear of loss of independence.
 - iii. May not recognize sexual assault as being an assault.
 - iv. Communication barriers:
 - 1. Lack of language access.
 - v. Dependence on abuser for care:
 - 1. Isolation from family/friends/society.
 - 2. Abuser may prevent victim from accessing help by withholding care.
 - 3. Abuser may prevent victim from accessing help by withholding assistive devices.
 - 4. Fear of loss of caregiver/having no one to support them.
 - vi. Not viewed by society as sexual.
 - vii. Lack of transportation.
 - viii. Previous negative experiences with law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
- C. LGBTQ+
 - i. Discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.
 - ii. Lack of access to services that competently address their needs.
 - iii. Concern their experience or victimization may reinforce negative stereotypes associated with their identity, culture, or community.
 - iv. Fear of being unjustly labeled as the perpetrator.
 - v. Fear of sexual orientation or gender identity being revealed without consent.
 - vi. Fear of outing the perpetrator.
 - vii. Potential in-group consequences such as fear of being socially ostracized for making a report against a fellow community member.
 - viii. Previous negative experiences with law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
- D. Persons living in rural areas:

- i. Lack of anonymity.
- ii. Communication barriers:
 - 1. Lack of language access.
 - 2. Technological barriers.
- iii. Physical isolation – distance from social services, medical care, and law enforcement.
- iv. Lack of transportation.
- v. Distrust of outsiders.
- vi. Distrust of law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
- E. Persons with limited English proficiency and immigrants:
 - i. Lack of access to services that competently address their needs.
 - ii. Fear of causing complications to their immigration status.
 - iii. Fear of deportation.
 - iv. Distrust of law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
 - v. Previous negative experiences with law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Remind learners that 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.

- F. Persons in the military, military families, and veterans:
 - i. Fear of confidentiality breaches.
 - ii. Lack of victim confidentiality resulting from leaders addressing the assault.
 - iii. “Tough it out” mentality.
 - iv. Unhealthy command climates.
 - v. Fear of collateral punishments from reporting.
- G. Persons of color:
 - i. Racism.
 - ii. Stereotypes.
 - iii. Concern their experience or victimization may reinforce negative stereotypes associated with their identity, culture, or community.
 - iv. Fear of increased surveillance of people of color.
 - v. Distrust of law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
 - vi. Previous negative experiences with law enforcement and/or the criminal justice system.
- H. These barriers do not negate the fact of a sexual assault and the need for law enforcement response when a sexual assault is reported.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY:

- Instructor must have learners complete an activity to make learners aware of local demographics and barriers to reporting sexual assault. Activity can be one of the two suggested activities below. Instructors may also create or use an activity of their own based on local demographics and barriers to reporting sexual assault.

- **SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:** Have learners use statistics on local population to understand the prevalence of sexual assault in their area and who might be at higher risk of sexual assault. Remind learners that just because someone is at a lower risk, does not mean they cannot be assaulted. Identify what types of barriers to reporting are common in their area for the general population and what might compound those barriers for underserved populations.
- **SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:** Divide the class into groups and assign each group an underserved population to research for 1.2 through 1.5. Each group will analyze the prevalence of sexual assault and potential barriers to reporting sexual assault of an underserved population. Each group will share the findings with the class. Learners actively participating in researching and discussing the information will increase engagement and set a purpose for learning about the people in their area of enforcement.

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 that might lead to self-censorship. Some examples of such an activity are a true or false survey or agree/disagree scenarios. Bringing 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.

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

- A. 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 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 that 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 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 – “This is unlikely to happen to me.”
 - 2. Blame avoidance – “If it did happen to me, I would not be to blame.”
 - 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. Areas with legal implications:
 - 1. Peace officers taking reports of sexual assault.
 - 2. Jury selection procedures.
 - 3. Men are less likely to make defensive attributions about victims of sexual harassment than women, regardless of the gender of the victim and perpetrator.
- 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.

1.7 Differentiate sexual assault and consent.

- A. Define different types of sexual assault:
 - i. Penal Code Sec. 22.011.(a) Sexual Assault
 - ii. Penal Code Sec. 22.012.(a) Indecent Assault
 - iii. Penal Code Sec. 22.021.(a) Aggravated Sexual Assault
- B. Define consent:
 - i. Consent is an informed, voluntary agreement from all participants for sexual activity.
 - ii. Consent cannot be given by individuals who are:
 1. Underage,
 2. Intoxicated or incapacitated by drugs or alcohol,
 3. Pressured, intimidated, or threatened into engaging in sexual activity,
 4. Asleep or unconscious.
 - iii. Penal Code Sec. 22.011 (b), a sexual assault is without the consent of the other person when:
 1. The perpetrator intentionally incapacitates the victim by use of substances such as alcohol, drugs, or other means.
 2. The victim is unable to comprehend the actions of the perpetrator (whether due to mental illness, disability, or otherwise) and the perpetrator knows this.
 3. The victim is unaware that the perpetrator is sexually assaulting them.
 4. The perpetrator holds any of the following positions of authority who causes the victim to submit or participate by using and exploiting their power, influence, and/or the victim's emotional dependency on them:
 - Clergyman
 - Mental health services/Health care services provider
 - Facility employee
 - Coach/Tutor
 - Caregiver

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.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY:

- Many biases and myths stem from a lack of understanding of what constitutes consent and what constitutes sexual assault.
- Instructors, pick a bias presented in Unit 1 to discuss as a group. Have learners think about a bias regarding sexual assault and consent they hold.
 - Have learners think about where the bias may have originated. Does it come from upbringing? Is it a bias shared by their family and peers? Is it in the media? Etc.

- Then, have learners apply the information learned that contradicts those biases.

1.8 Identify facts about sexual assault.

- A. Anyone, regardless of age, race, gender, ability, sex, sexual orientation, occupation, or cultural background, can be a victim of sexual assault.
- B. Sexual assault can be committed in any relationship, even if the victim is married to or held a previous relationship with the perpetrator.
- C. Most perpetrators are known to victims. Perpetrators often choose vulnerable victims and those they believe can be overtaken.
- D. Perpetrators may use substances such as alcohol or drugs to cognitively impair their victims in order to assault them.
- E. Victims may not resist the perpetrator for many reasons, for example:
 - i. Fear of making the perpetrator angry, resulting in injury.
 - ii. Lack of resistance as a coping mechanism of trauma.
- F. Victims may demonstrate a range of response to trauma.
- G. There are many reasons victims may not immediately report the assault to police. For example:
 - i. Having to re-live the experience.
 - ii. Fear of retaliation.
 - iii. Believing they will not be believed.
 - iv. Fear of being blamed.
 - v. Feelings of shame.
- H. Delaying reporting to law enforcement does not mean the assault did not happen.

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.
 - Kissing and situation becomes uncomfortable.
 - Involuntary arousal when not consenting to activity or appeasing the perpetrator.
- 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.

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 defined as an event that 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 wellbeing.

2.2 Identify the parts of the brain that are affected by trauma.

- A. Defense circuitry
 - i. Defense circuitry activates survival reflexes, self-protection habits, and alters memory encoding and consolidation.
 - ii. Always scanning for danger.
 - iii. When fear and/or stress kicks in – within seconds the defense circuitry can become impaired or ‘taken offline.’
 - iv. When high stress or an attack is detected, it can rapidly dominate the brain.
 1. Impairs the rational prefrontal cortex
 2. Controls attention
 3. Shifts behavior to reflexes and habits
 4. Determines what gets into memory
- B. Prefrontal cortex
 - i. Guides thoughts, behaviors, and feelings and controls the executive functions of the brain.
 - ii. Problem solving
 - iii. Logical reasoning

- iv. Memory – integrating information into a narrative with beginning, middle, and end.
- v. Planning
- vi. Redirecting attention
- vii. Monitoring self and emotions
- C. Limbic system
 - i. Amygdala
 - 1. Impacts stress-related behaviors and memories.
 - 2. Automatically triggers the defense circuitry to prepare a reaction to the threat.
 - ii. Hippocampus
 - 1. Has an integral role in encoding memories.
 - 2. Compares what you are seeing, smelling, and hearing against existing instincts of safety and danger.
 - 3. Goes through two stages during a traumatic event:
 - Flashbulb mode – immediately goes into overdrive to encode as much data into memory as it can.
 - Fragmented/refractory mode – focuses on consolidating everything that was absorbed and was already being consolidated during the initial flashbulb phase. There are fewer resources available to encode new information, especially more complex information such as context and time sequence.
 - iii. Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis (HPA Axis)
 - 1. Releases hormones in response to stress and trauma.
 - 2. Hormones can be helpful in responding to protect emotional and physical safety but may make it difficult to encode and consolidate memories.
 - Main stress hormones released: opioids, oxytocin, catecholamines and cortisol.

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. Traumatic situations often impair the prefrontal cortex.
 - i. Inability to think logically.
 - 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. People assume there is one option or the other, but they are not mutually exclusive.
 2. Unable to think logically and analyze options rationally.
 3. Response may include physically fighting, pushing, struggling, and/or fighting verbally by saying 'no'.
 4. Running, hiding, or backing away.
- iii. Involuntary compliance:
1. The victim may comply 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:
 - The perpetrator threatened the victim with physical harm or violence against them or their loved ones.
 - The perpetrator may be in a position of authority or trust over the victim, exploiting this power dynamic to force compliance.
 - The perpetrator uses physical force, making it difficult or impossible for the victim to resist.
 - The perpetrator isolates the victim from help or support, making them feel helpless and more likely to comply.
 - 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. The awareness is automatically and involuntarily disconnected from disturbing and painful sensations and emotions.
 - ii. Dissociation can manifest in various ways.
 1. Often described as an out of body experience where someone feels detached from reality.
 2. The person's attention and awareness are altered.
 3. May accompany behaviors such as fighting, fleeing, tonic or collapsed immobility.
 - iii. Dissociation is very common and is the body in self-protection mode.
- B. Tonic immobility:
- i. Often triggered by extreme fear, physical contact with the perpetrator, physical restraint, and the perception of inescapability.
 1. Onset and offset may be sudden when the defense circuitry perceives there is no escape.

- 2. May still be alert and aware or may experience dissociation at the same time, disconnecting them from being aware of what is happening with their bodies.
- ii. A condition marked by "waxy mobility" in the limbs, meaning the person's arms and legs are rigid yet can still be moved or positioned.
- iii. They may also experience:
 - 1. Periods of fixed or unfocused staring.
 - 2. Sensations of coldness.
 - 3. Numbness or insensitivity to pain.
 - 4. Inability to speak or move.
 - 5. Intermittent periods where their eyes are closed.
 - 6. May initially have an elevated heart rate and high blood pressure that tends to progressively decrease over time.
- iv. Episodes of tonic immobility usually occur after a failed struggle or an attempt to flee.
- v. A victim who has experienced tonic immobility and can recall being sexually assaulted may say: "I tried to scream, but I couldn't" or "I tried to push them away, but I couldn't move."
- C. Collapsed immobility:
 - i. Often triggered by extreme fear, physical contact with the perpetrator, physical restraint, and the perception of inescapability.
 - 1. Sudden onset but gradual offset.
 - 2. Can be described as "playing possum".
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. A condition marked by:
 - 1. An inability to speak or move.
 - 2. Exhibiting general loss of muscle tone.
 - 3. Victim may faint or pass out due to decrease in heart rate and blood pressure.
 - iv. Victims may describe it as "blacking out," which is not the same blacking out induced by drugs or alcohol.

2.5 Identify self-protection habits in response to trauma.

- A. Victims may use habitual behaviors to cope with being sexually assaulted.
 - i. They might use polite and passive habits they have learned to resist unwanted sexual advances without causing a scene.
 - ii. When fear kicks in, a habit developed by surviving a previous trauma activates as a way 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. These experiences can highly influence how the victim responds to trauma, even as an adult.
 - 1. The victim may have been sexually abused in childhood and developed a habitual response of dissociating or entering a state of tonic or collapsed immobility.
 - 2. They may have witnessed parents' frequent fights, which led to a habit of becoming incredibly quiet or even "invisible."
 - 3. They often had to act as a peacekeeper in their family, which led them to do whatever necessary to avoid conflicts.
- C. Habitual speech patterns
 - i. When logic and speech planning are disrupted, victims may resort to ingrained speech habits during a sexual assault. Typically, these patterns do not involve verbal protests or explicit boundary setting.
 - ii. 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."
 - iii. 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.
 - Often the focus is on what is needed to survive.
 - Details are likely to imprint into memory.
 - Details are sensory-based — examples are smells, sounds, and visual details.
 - 2. Peripheral details are details surrounding an event.
 - May not seem important or significant.
 - May or may not be remembered, not central to the experience.
 - 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 and that object 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.

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.

REQUIRED 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 trauma responses may appear counterintuitive to biases of sexual assault.

- A. Responses to trauma are natural, automatic responses that help the victim survive a traumatic event.
- B. Reactions such as defense cascade reflexes, dissociation, tonic immobility, and collapsed immobility may cause the victim to appear as though they did not resist, when in fact they may have been incapable of resisting.
 - i. Victims may feel shame and confusion or self-blame for having been unable to stop the assault.
- C. Trauma changes the consolidation of memory and makes recall difficult.
 - i. Memory may be fragmented and inconsistent.
 - ii. Memories are not stored in a narrative manner.
 - iii. When a victim does not remember information or recalls something differently at a later time, this does not necessarily mean they are lying. The victim may be trying to fill in gaps with an answer when they do not remember.
- D. Victims may have inconsistent memories. These memories are usually associated with peripheral details.
 - i. This inconsistency can be consistent with trauma and how trauma may have affected the brain.
- E. The hormones released during the sexual assault may cause the victim to have a range of emotions.
 - i. The victim may have a flat affect, inappropriate behavior such as laughter, or to be very emotional when reporting an assault or during an investigation.

2.8 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. Appearing dazed
 - vii. Crying
 - viii. Self-blame
 - ix. Wringing of hands
 - x. 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 that contradicts those biases.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

- Show learners the following video of an officer recalling a critical incident that 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. Instructor can state or pose questions to facilitate learner understanding that how they respond to victims is equally impactful and important.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

- Use the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) trauma informed interview role-play scenario provided in Appendix B. Instructors can also come up with their own scenarios.

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.

- 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 resources for interviewing victims of sexual assault.

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, 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”, that 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, families, 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 the best practices of a trauma-informed approach.

- A. Use the six key principles fundamental to trauma-informed approach:
 - i. Safety:
 - 1. Ensure the victim feels safe physically, emotionally, and psychologically.
 - 2. Put victim at ease and increase their sense of security.
 - 3. Address stressors, fears, and safety concerns on the front end.
 - 4. Meet basic needs such as warmth.
 - 5. Conduct conversation and interviews in a place that feels safe and private for the victim.
 - ii. Trustworthiness and transparency:
 - 1. Build trust with the victim by being trustworthy and transparent in all interactions.
 - 2. Assist victim in making informed decisions regarding their participation in the investigation by answering questions and providing accurate information.
 - 3. Prepare victim with what to expect and avoid unexpected changes if possible.
 - iii. Peer support
 - 1. Facilitate access to victim assistance support throughout the reporting and investigative process.
 - iv. Collaboration and mutuality:
 - 1. Emphasize the importance of involving the victim in the decision-making process regarding their own care and treatment.

2. Adapt, wherever possible, to meet the needs and wishes of the victim to foster their sense of control.
- v. Empowerment, voice, and choice:
 1. Support the victim in feeling empowered and in control of their own recovery.
 2. Respect the individual's choices and preferences and allow them to have a voice in their treatment and support services.
 3. Choose language that accurately reflects the victim's experience.
 4. Ensure the victim can exercise their rights.
 - Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A
- vi. Cultural, historical, and gender issues:
 1. Recognizing and addressing the cultural, historical, and gender-related factors that can influence a victim's experience of trauma and their healing process.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Use information from Unit 1 to discuss how learners can apply trauma-informed approaches to overcome the barriers discussed in student learning objectives 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5.

- Apply knowledge of how trauma affects recall when conducting interviews.
- Remember victims may omit important information out of embarrassment, shame, or fear they won't be believed – this does not mean they are being dishonest.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: The way a victim is first approached can significantly influence their involvement in the criminal justice process. Therefore, it is crucial for every officer to establish a connection with the victim at every stage, from the first initial contact to prosecution, fostering trust and cooperation.

3.3 Identify best practices for initial contact with victim.

- A. The best practice for initial response to sexual assault is following agency protocol for standard incident response.
- B. Ensure immediate safety and address any medical concerns.
 - i. If there are severe injuries, call emergency services.
- C. Provide victim support such as:
 - i. An advocate:
 1. Introducing an advocate at the scene when able may help build rapport and encourage victim engagement.
 - ii. An interpreter, as appropriate:
 1. Do not use a family member as a translator.
 2. Use a professional or agency translator to ensure language is translated verbatim and not sanitized.
 - iii. Advise their rights:
 1. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.401
- D. Provide a safe and private location:
 - i. Make sure the victim is in a safe location away from the perpetrator.

- E. Take the victim's statement.
 - i. Obtain a basic verbal statement allowing the victim to completely articulate what happened.
 - ii. If follow up questions are needed, use open ended language.
 - iii. Be mindful when asking follow up questions.
 - 1. Explain the line of questions to not appear to be questioning the credibility and believability of the victim's experience, but to establish elements of the crime.
- F. Allow victim to make choices such as:
 - i. Where they would like to start the interview.
 - ii. When they would like to schedule the interview.
 - iii. When they would like to take a break.
- G. Transparency:
 - i. Inform them of the next step of the process.
 - ii. An investigator may explain the rest of the process to the victim in a follow up interview.
 - iii. Transparency about the process increases engagement in the criminal justice system.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Refer to agency policy and protocol for notifying investigative units.

3.4 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 § 56.303
 - 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.
 - 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. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.403
 - 2. A victim has a legal right to obtain an exam within 120 hours of assault.
 - 3. Evidence may still be available beyond 120 hours, and there may be good reason to conduct an exam after that time period.
 - 4. Every incident should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
 - 5. Health and Safety Code § 323.0051
 - 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.

1. If possible, ask the victim to bring a change of clothes to the exam. Clothing may be collected as evidence.
- v. Call for an advocate to accompany the victim during the exam, if not already present.
 1. If an advocate is not available by the medical facility conducting the SAFE, follow up with a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE).
- vi. Ensure the victim has transportation to a SAFE ready facility.
 1. The victim can choose to transport themselves, be transported by an advocate, or can be transported by an ambulance if injuries are serious.
 - Health and Safety Code § 323.004
 - Health and Safety Code § 323.0015
 2. If law enforcement transports the victim to the hospital, the officer should not ask the victim to sit in the back of a patrol car.
 3. If no SAFE ready facility is available in the community, transport the victim to the nearest emergency room available, pursuant to community Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) protocols.
 - Health and Safety Code § 323.0051

3.5 Identify best practices for continuing the investigation in a trauma-informed manner.

- A. Do not, at any time, pressure the victim to participate in the investigation or prosecution of the assault.
 - i. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A 303
- B. Answer any questions the victim may have honestly.
- C. Documentation to provide to the victim:
 - i. Responding officer contact information,
 - ii. Case number,
 - iii. A victim's rights card, and
 - iv. Hard copies of information about available resources when available.
- D. If the assault happened in a different jurisdiction:
 - i. Complete an information only report and forward to the appropriate jurisdiction.
 - ii. Ensure report was received.
- E. Investigative interviews:
 - i. Follow agency protocol regarding referring the victim to investigators to conduct an investigative interview.
 - ii. Provide an advocate before an investigative interview.
 1. The goal is to avoid repeated interviews and potential for re-traumatization.
 - iii. Do not require or suggest the victim complete a written statement.
 1. Use audio/video recording.
 2. Inconsistencies between an interview and written statement may be used against the victim by the legal defense.

- F. Do not threaten victims with prosecution for false reporting or infer in any way that they are being untruthful.
- G. Crime scene(s):
 - i. Secure crime scene(s) when appropriate.
 - ii. Secure digital evidence when available.
 - iii. Do not seize the victim's phone.
 - 1. Use less intrusive methods to collect potential pertinent electronic evidence with the victim's consent.
 - iv. Establish search authority.
 - 1. Consent vs. search warrant
 - v. Perform initial canvassing of the area.
 - vi. Search for witnesses, surveillance, cameras, evidence, etc.
- H. Suspect(s):
 - i. Consider detention of suspect(s) to preserve evidence when warranted.
 - ii. Determine if/when a statement from the suspect(s) can be obtained.
 - iii. Ensure due process.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY:

- Instructors: This activity is geared towards building rapport before interviewing. This activity can be conducted through role-play, written activity, etc.
- Create prompts that represent different victim's behaviors and responses. Have learners go through the initial patrol response to a sexual assault. Have learners demonstrate building rapport with the victim, gathering information to establish elements of a crime, and informing the victim about the SAFE.
- Provide the learner feedback on their response.

3.6 Identify victim-centered trauma-informed interview approaches.

- A. Reiterate to the victim:
 - i. It is okay not to know the answers to all the questions.
 - ii. The victim should not guess if they do not know the answer.
 - iii. 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.
- B. Active listening:
 - i. Do not interrupt the victim while speaking.
 - ii. Take notes and ask for clarification when victim has finished speaking.
- C. Chronological vs. categorical interviewing:
 - i. Trauma affects the way memories are encoded. Fragmented memories may be randomly stored and not recalled chronologically.
 - ii. Gather information as the victim remembers.
 - iii. Chronological interviewing requires a timeline of the incident, which the victim may not recall.
 - 1. Avoid prompts such as, "And then what happened?" or "Start at the beginning and tell me what happened."

- iv. Categorical interviewing allows victims to share fragmented memories as they remember them.
- D. Use open-ended questions when possible.
 - i. "Where would you like to start?" or "Are you able to tell me more about what happened when....?"
 - ii. Open-ended questions give the person being interviewed the opportunity to share more information about what they can recall.
 - iii. This method helps the victim's brain retrieve information from a traumatic event and offers them more control.
- E. Use open-ended prompts to clarify meaning such as:
 - i. A victim said they "froze."
 - ii. The investigator could ask, "Can you tell me more about when you froze?" or "What were you feeling when you froze?"
- F. Ask non-leading questions.
 - i. For example, give the victim a piece of their memory and ask them to say more about that.
 - ii. Instead of:
 1. "How were you laying?"
 2. "You mentioned to me there was a gun. What can you tell me about the gun?"
 3. "What did you believe was going to happen?"
 4. "How did you end up at the party?"
 5. "What made you feel comfortable enough to leave with them?"
 - iii. Try:
 1. "How was your body positioned?"
 2. "Tell me more about _____."
 3. "A moment ago, you said they stuck it in you. What did they stick in you?"
- G. Don't ask "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, such as:
 1. "There could be potential evidence on the clothing you were wearing. Are those the clothes you had on?"
 2. "Tell me about the conditions that prevented you from leaving/escaping."
- H. Focus on what the victim can remember about their experience and build on what the victim recalls.
 - i. For example:
 1. "You mentioned they grabbed you around the neck. Tell me more of what you can remember about that."
- I. Ask sensory questions focusing on emotional and sensory experiences.

- i. The brain stores experiential memories when experiencing trauma.
- ii. Ask questions about what they thought, felt, feared, saw, smelled, tasted, heard, or touched during the incident.
 - 1. “Do you remember smelling anything? What do you recall hearing? What do you remember feeling physically?”
 - 2. “You said they put ___ in your mouth, what could you taste?” “Is there anything you will never forget?” What could you hear at the time?” “Was there an odor or aroma that stood out to you?” “What was the temperature like?”
- J. Do not ask questions that imply that the incident could not be a sexual assault if there were prior consensual sexual acts.
 - i. Instead of:
 - 1. “Have you had sex with this person before?”
 - ii. Try:
 - 1. “Has this person done anything like this to you in the past?”
- K. Record and refer to the language the victim uses to describe body parts or acts but clarify meaning of the language.
- L. Be patient.
 - i. Give the victim time to process and work through the trauma during the interview.

3.7 Identify best practices on concluding an interview.

- A. Encourage the victim to contact the investigator if they remember additional information to report.
- B. Thank the victim for their trust in telling their story.
- C. Explain the next steps:
 - i. Who will follow up with the victim and how they will make contact.
 - ii. What to do if contacted by the suspect, or friend or family of the suspect.
 - iii. Provide resources and information on how to obtain an order for protection if applicable.
 - 1. Code of Criminal Procedure § 17.292
 - iv. After concluding the interview, it is best practice to continue rapport and trust with a victim by continuing to communicate.
 - 1. Return calls from the victim.
 - 2. Continue to communicate with the victim even if there is no information to share. This will assist in keeping victim engaged in the process.
 - 3. Ensure the advocacy connection is made to assist and offer support and services to the victim.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

- Show or share examples of good interviews and bad interviews of sexual assault to emphasize the difference between the two. Have learners identify good and bad actions taken by the law enforcement officer in each example. See Appendix C for a suggested video.
- Divide learners into triads to role play interviewing a victim of sexual assault. One victim,

one law enforcement officer, and one to offer observation and feedback. Give the victim a brief scenario to use. The law enforcement officer will conduct the interview using a trauma-informed approach. After the interview, the observer offers feedback of what went well and areas for improvement. Have all learners practice every role.

- See Appendix C for resources or use agency videos and scenarios.

3.8 Identify best practices for documenting during an interview.

- A. It is important to remember there is no appropriate response to sexual assault.
- B. Use concrete and objective wording, free of interpretation or diagnosis of trauma responses.
 - i. "The victim appeared very disconnected while talking about..."
 - ii. "They felt like they were unable to move."
 - iii. "They felt like they blacked out."
 - iv. "They felt spaced out."
- C. Document everything observed, including small or insignificant details.
 - i. "The victim began sobbing. It became difficult for the victim to complete a sentence when recalling the attack."
 - ii. "The victim's hands began to shake, and the victim broke eye contact when they shared details of the attack as they went from a seated position in the office chair to a fetal position on the floor."
- D. Document exact wording. Do not sanitize statements.
 - i. The real words used by victims and suspects are vital for an accurate reconstruction of the sexual assault experience.
- E. Include details that establish elements such as premeditation, coercion, threats, force, fear, inability to consent, and grooming.
 - i. Describe all elements that contributed to the victim's experience, such as:
 1. The perpetrator's relative size or strength.
 2. Prior history of physical or sexual abuse between the victim and perpetrator.
 3. If the perpetrator is physically isolating victim from friends and family.
 4. The victim's mental incapacitation due to drugs, alcohol, or a cognitive disability.
- 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 victim incapacity to resist perpetrator due to physical ability or response to trauma.
- H. Address the victim's use of drugs or alcohol.

- i. It is important to document whether the victim used drugs or alcohol before or after the sexual assault and describe what the circumstances were.
- ii. The victim's use of drugs or alcohol must be documented in a straightforward way.
- iii. It's important to remember the victim's use of drugs or alcohol, whether consensual or not, does not mitigate the circumstances of sexual assault.
- I. Document the victim's description of what "no" looked like or felt like. It may be subtle or overt. Resistance can be communicated in ways other than words such as:
 - i. Looking away
 - ii. Closing eyes
 - iii. Positioning or moving body
- J. Victim statements may have gaps.
 - i. Refrain from filling in the gaps for the victim.
- K. Document the perpetrator's verbal statements.
 - i. Suspects often provide information to justify their actions that will corroborate the victim's story.

REQUIRED ACTIVITY:

- Have learners practice writing trauma-informed reports.
 - First have learners rewrite a written report using a trauma-informed approach.
 - Then have learners write their own report from start to finish.
- Scenarios can come from videos or role-playing.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Follow agency policy and protocol for initial response, interviewing, investigating, and reporting incidents of the sexual assault.

3.9 Analyze the benefits of using a trauma-informed approach.

- A. Empowers victims and helps promote healing.
- B. Strengthens investigation and prosecution of sexual assault cases.
- C. Provides understanding of victim behaviors.
- D. Minimizes re-traumatization of the victim.
- E. Encourages victims to proceed in the criminal justice system, which will hold the perpetrators accountable, create a safer community, and build community relations.

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 the sexual assault protocol for their agency. If learners are from different agencies, have learners identify the sexual assault protocol for their respective agencies, if available.

4.2 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 your area, and notifying advocates. For more information about SART, see:
 - Local Government Code § 351.251
 - Local Government Code § 351.252
 - Local Government Code § 251.256
- Co-teaching this section with a 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.

4.3 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. SARTs work together, make appropriate referrals, and build trust with victims.
 - viii. Victims feeling supported throughout the reporting and investigation processes.

4.4 Identify victim's rights to an advocate in the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP).

- A. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.351 Presence of Sexual Assault Program Advocate

- B. Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.3515 Presence of Sexual Assault Program Advocate or other Victim's Representative During Law Enforcement Interview

4.5 Identify types of sexual assault advocates.

- A. Community-based advocates:
 - i. Can offer 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 that 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.
 - 4. Code of Criminal Procedure §56A.403
 - 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 that has completed the SATP may be offered.

4.6 Identify how sexual assault advocates benefit victims.

- A. A sexual assault advocate is an individual trained by a sexual assault program to:
 - i. Participate alongside the victim to offer support.
 - ii. Accompany the victim for the sexual assault forensic exam (SAFE).
 - iii. Provide resources and information.
 - iv. Participate throughout the criminal justice process if the victim desires.
 - v. Provide counseling.
 - vi. Ensure victim's rights are invoked and enforced.
 - 1. Notification of Rights, Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.401
 - 2. Protective Order, Code of Criminal Procedure § 17.292
 - 3. Additional Rights of Victims of Sexual Assault, Code of Criminal Procedure § 56A.052
 - 4. Designation of Pseudonym, Code of Criminal Procedure § 58.102
 - 5. Victim Information Confidential, Code of Criminal Procedure § 58.103

- B. Victims shall be offered assistance from an advocate and provided advocate's contact information.
- C. Officer shall offer the victim the opportunity to have an advocate present during an interview.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE: Advocates are an excellent source of information and support for victims of sexual assault, but there are other resources that 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 that 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 Police – 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-j/IACPRespondingtoSexualViolenceinLGBTQCommunties2017.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 that lists 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 that addresses 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 that lists 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 that gives an overview about the misconceptions that 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 that allows 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 that lists 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 that reports on 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 that 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 that are 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 that provides recommendations for law enforcement on how to improve response to sexual assault, includes examples from project sites that 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 that identifies 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=nwnQHvIH0q0> (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=pyOmVt2Z7nc> (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=CnIXzD2pYSA> (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 that has 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 that gives 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 that 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 that 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.azcvcs.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:

SAFVIC System – Training Video “Trauma Informed Interviews”:

<https://safvicsystems.org/training-videos/> (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).

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).

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).

Recommended Video for Suggested Activity under 3.7:

How to be a Trauma-Informed Police Officer (14 mins):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDGRik6WKKM>

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):

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 that includes details on a SAFE-Ready Facility. The information notes that a victim may still receive a forensic examination for sexual assault at a Non-SAFE-Ready facility, however neither a SANE nor a certified sexual assault nurse may conduct that exam at that facility.

<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 – 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_fags/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 that offers 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 that provides 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:

Dr. Rebecca Campbell – Rape Survivors' Experiences With the Legal and Medical Systems Do Rape Victim Advocates Make a Difference?: A research paper that studies the impact of rape victim advocate presence on rape victims. The paper tests whether rape victims who had the assistance of rape victim advocates had more positive experiences with the legal and medical systems compared to those who did not work with advocates.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7453682_Rape_Survivors'_Experiences_With_the_Legal_and_Medical_Systems_Do_Rape_Victim_Advocates_Make_a_Difference (last accessed September 27, 2023).

Department of Justice – Benefits of a Coordinated Community Response to Sexual Violence: A research paper published by the U.S. Department of Justice. The paper goes into depth about the impact of community and justice system collaboration. When systems of justice and community collaborate to provide a more coordinated response to sexual violence, victims are then better served, and justice systems are more effective in holding offenders accountable.

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/benefits-coordinated-community-response-sexual-violence> (last accessed September 27, 2023).

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