

Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations Training Overview

This training has been developed for police, prosecutors, advocates, higher education, the military, and the government / private sector and it can be modified to meet your needs.

Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations Training (2 days)

Instructor: Chief Tom Tremblay (Ret) (See bio on page 6)

Course Description: Sexual assault is one of the most complex crimes in our society and the activism and outrage about sexual assault has never been higher. The complexities of these crimes require us to think broadly and comprehensively including examining the myths and biases and the new “trauma-informed approach” training, including the neurobiology of trauma, for all multi-disciplinary partners responsible for the response to sexual assault / misconduct cases. The effects of trauma are often misinterpreted so justice in sexual assault response begins with an understanding of the devastating impacts of sexual violence trauma on victims and survivors. By understanding trauma, all those who work with victims can contribute to their immediate and long-term recovery and lay the foundation for mutual cooperation and respect on which a successful response, investigation, and prosecution / adjudication is built.

TRAINING OVERVIEW:

This consulting and training are offered as guidance for consideration. It is not intended to constitute legal advice, or to create a legal standard of care. All consulting and training are designed based on experience and input from multi-disciplinary partners to reflect examples of promising practices, alternative approaches, and lessons learned. Participants should follow their own policies, procedures, and/or guidance from their respective legal counsel.

Instructor will deliver all presentations in PowerPoint to be presented with common principles of adult learning. Presentations are multi-media and include lecture, large group discussions, small group exercises, case studies, current events, and lessons learned. Consultant encourages multi-disciplinary participation in the training. There is no limit on the number of attendees, however 35 or more attendees will limit opportunity for small group work. Large group activity and engagement will be utilized for events with over 35 participants.

TRAINING GOAL: To ensure that individuals providing service to sexual assault victims / survivors recognize and understand victim trauma and utilize effective approaches and interview skills to enhance response, investigations, and prosecutions / adjudications.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Examine sexual assault myths, rape culture, personal and societal biases regarding sexual assault, and the potential impact on victims, offenders, and justice.
2. Define victim trauma in the context of sexual assault and other crimes involving interpersonal violence.
3. Recognize the “trauma-informed approach” is grounded in the responsiveness and understanding of the impact of victim trauma, emphasizing physical, psychological, and emotional safety for victims / survivors, and providers.
4. Explore the “neurobiology of trauma” – how the brain and body function in response to fear / trauma and the impact on memory and recall (fragmented memory).
5. Identify successful first response and communication strategies to minimize victim trauma and promote victim empowerment, in an effort to assist the victim in overcoming potential fear and reluctance to engage in the reporting / investigative process.
6. Develop trauma-informed victim interview skills to help capture compelling evidence of the victim’s experience including the exploration of sensory details and considering the psychophysiological evidence of trauma.
7. Examine common criminal sexual offender behaviors and course of conduct and develop offender focused investigative strategies.

TRAINING NEEDS & EQUIPMENT:

All presentations will be delivered from Consultant’s laptop computer. Client agrees to provide PowerPoint projector, screen, easel / easel pad and markers, and audio capabilities sufficient for the size of the training room. Depending on the size of the room, and acoustics, a lavalier microphone for the Consultant may be necessary. A handheld microphone for participants may be necessary as well.

Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations Training

Day 1 Training Agenda

Day 1

8:15 – 8:30	Registration & Sign In
8:30 – 9:30	Introductions and Overview: Sexual Assault Common Challenges
9:30 – 9:40	Break
9:40 – 10:40	Exploration of Rape Myths and Rape Culture: a look at the impact on personal and societal bias and the pursuit of justice
10:40 – 10:50	Break
10:50 – 12:00	Impact of Rape Myths and Rape Culture on investigations: small group exercise
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00	Trauma-Informed Approach: providing physical, psychological and emotional safety for victims and understanding the neurobiology of Trauma – how the brain and the body respond to trauma
2:00 – 2:10	Break
2:10 – 3:10	Trauma and Impact: understanding victim trauma and impact
3:10 – 3:20	Break
3:20 – 4:20	Trauma-Informed First Response: first impression matters. Enhancing communication skills to build trust through victim empowerment
4:20 – 4:30	Wrap-up / Q & A / Evaluation

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Day 2 Training Agenda

Day 2

8:15 – 8:30	Registration & Sign In
8:30 – 9:30	Trauma-Informed Victim Interviews: preliminary and formal interview process and enhancing interview skills to capture the victim’s experience
9:30 – 9:40	Break
9:40 – 10:40	Trauma-Informed Victim Interview: exploring sensory details, seeking compelling evidence of the victim’s experience
10:40 – 10:50	Break
10:50 – 12:00	Trauma-Informed Victim Interview: explaining and reframing questions to minimize victim blaming language and tone, and considering the psychophysiological evidence of trauma
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00	Understanding Criminal Sexual Offender Behaviors and Course of Conduct: developing offender focused investigative strategies
2:00 – 2:10	Break
2:10 – 3:10	Promising Practices: Enhancing a Coordinated Community Response
3:10 – 3:30	Wrap-up / Q & A / Evaluation

Consultant / Instructor Biography: Chief Thomas R. Tremblay (Ret)

Throughout his distinguished thirty-year policing career as an officer, detective, special investigations unit director, supervisor, police chief, and state public safety commissioner, Tom Tremblay has been a passionate leader for the prevention of domestic and sexual violence. He is a retired Chief of Police from Burlington, VT, and the former Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Public Safety. Tom is now a national and international advisor and trainer for police, prosecutors, advocates, higher education, the military, and government / private sector.

Tom is a contracted subject matter expert on domestic violence and sexual assault for numerous organizations including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Police Executive Research Forum, Alliance for Hope International, End Violence Against Women International, the Rape Abuse Incest National Network, RTI Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division and Office on Violence Against Women.

Tom is a faculty member for the IACP National Law Enforcement Leadership Initiative on Violence Against Women Crimes and he is a national leader in the development and delivery of Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations Training. Tom assisted the IACP with the development and delivery of a national curriculum for Trauma-Informed Response to Sexual Assault. He also assisted the National Center for Campus Public Safety with the 2014 White House Task Force recommendation to develop a new curriculum for Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations and Adjudications specific for Colleges and Universities across the country. Tom has also advised and trained numerous state medical regulatory investigation and adjudication processes in trauma-informed approaches to sexual misconduct cases.

Tom provides litigation consultant services for DOJ investigations involving reports of unlawful gender discrimination by law enforcement agencies in domestic violence and sexual assault response. Tom has also served as an independent monitor for DOJ agreements with law enforcement agencies following findings of unlawful gender discrimination. Tom's oversight work in Missoula Montana assisted the City Police and the University of Montana Police in achieving full compliance with their respective agreements with the DOJ to reform sexual assault response and investigations. Tom also assists the DOJ in promoting gender bias prevention strategies for law enforcement when responding to crimes involving gender-based violence including addressing officer involved domestic violence and sexual misconduct.

Tom is frequently sought after to comment on high profile cases and national news stories related to domestic violence and sexual assault. He has been included in news publications, programs, and investigative reports by CNN, NPR, ABC News, NBC News, Slate Magazine, Vox News, Baltimore Sun, Star Tribune, Indianapolis Star, and the Lansing Journal.

Tom holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. He is a graduate of the 183rd Session of the FBI National Academy, the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar, the Police Executive Research Forum–Senior Management Institute for Police, and the National Law Enforcement Leadership Institute on Violence Against Women.

In 2022, End Violence Against Women International awarded Tom the prestigious **2022 Visionary Award** for his efforts to end violence against women, recognizing him for his bold vision, courageous leadership, honor, integrity, empathy, selfless advocacy, and generous partnership.