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**Introduction**

**Acknowledgments**

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**Why New Strategies are Needed for Sexual Assault Investigation**

Nonstranger sexual assaults are undoubtedly among the most challenging cases investigated by police. Yet very few training materials exist in this area, and none have previously been recognized on a national level. This curriculum was designed to fill this gap, developed by the National Center for Women & Policing and funded by the Violence Against Women Office, Office of Justice Programs. In developing the curriculum, one of the primary objectives was to overcome the traditional focus on sexual assaults committed by strangers.

Specifically, the curriculum was designed to train police to identify and collect the kind of evidence that is appropriate for cases involving known offenders. Because the vast majority of sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim, most investigations should not focus exclusively on the kind of evidence that establishes identity (like DNA, trace and associative evidence). Such evidence is relevant in acquaintance cases, but it is not as crucially important as it is in a stranger rape case where identity is the primary issue.

- In contrast, police investigation in cases of acquaintance rape should focus on evidence that establishes the absence of consent and/or the presence of force or threat, because this is the type of evidence necessary to overcome a consent defense.

The good news is that many of the evidentiary techniques that can be used to establish force in consent cases are not new. Rather, these techniques are familiar to officers from other kinds of cases, such as domestic violence, child sexual assault, etc.

**The Teamwork Approach to Sexual Assault Response**

A second goal of the training is to highlight how important it is for police officers to take responsibility for implementing a teamwork approach to sexual assault response. Sexual assault cases are complex and sensitive, and effective response requires effort from a number of team members with interdependent roles and responsibilities.
To address this issue, the training curriculum is organized around the roles of various team members in the coordinated response to sexual assault. Team members include:

The Victim

Throughout the entire curriculum, we will take a victim-centered approach to sexual assault investigation. If the sexual assault response team is thought of as spokes of a wheel, the victim should be seen as the center of that wheel. Moreover, a victim-centered approach indicates that the victim herself will determine the course of her recovery and level of involvement with the criminal justice system.

Without the victim's cooperation, successful investigation and prosecution are nearly impossible. Therefore, victims who decide to become involved with the criminal justice system must be seen as a central and valued member of the team, and they must be treated accordingly. Victims need to be considered at every stage of the coordinated response to sexual assault, and they must be informed and included in the efforts of all team members.

In the module on dynamics, we'll discuss the characteristics of sexual assault victims. First, we'll present statistics that document the scope and nature of the problem, including the number of rape victims and the characteristics of victims, perpetrators, and cases. In the module entitled, "victim impact," we'll also cover some of the latest material on how victims respond to sexual assault victimization, exploring how this could potentially affect the police investigation.

In addition, we will put the victim at the center of every single training module in this curriculum, by explaining how she can be informed and involved at every stage of the investigation.

As the U.S. Attorney General stated in a 1992 report:

To be both effective and humane, a criminal justice system must respond to the needs of victims of crimes at all stages of the criminal justice process. From the time law enforcement officers arrive at the scene of the crime, through apprehension of a suspect, the trial, sentencing, appeals and punishment, victims are profoundly affected, and their perspective deserves consideration. It is incumbent upon all criminal justice professionals to think of the victim and to evaluate how their decisions affect the victim and the victim's family.¹

Law Enforcement

Clearly, police officers are a critically important member of the coordinated response team, and most of the material in this training program will address their many responsibilities, including: the module on preliminary investigation, victim interviews, suspect dynamics and interviews, drug-facilitated sexual assault, etc. Within each of these units, we have sought to describe the responsibilities of police in an effective investigation but we have also outlined how these duties relate to those of other team members.

Medical Personnel

Medical personnel have three primary responsibilities as team members in coordinated sexual assault response: (1) they collect evidence from the body of both suspect and victim, (2) they conduct a medical interview of the victim, and (3) they provide any medical care that is necessary for the victim.

In the module on the forensic examination, we describe in detail the procedures that medical personnel use for responding effectively to sexual assault victims. However, this information is also integrated into the material pertaining to the preliminary investigation, victim advocates, and other sections that describe how police should interact with medical personnel.

Victim Advocate

Victim advocates provide supportive services to victims immediately after their sexual assault, either at the hospital, police station, or later during the investigation and prosecution. This is an important part of the teamwork response, because advocates can keep victims informed and emotionally capable of cooperating with police, medical personnel, and prosecutors.

The role of victim advocates is covered extensively in the module explicitly addressing victim advocacy, but it is also integrated in sections that address the preliminary investigation, forensic examination, and victim interviews.

Prosecutor

Finally, the goal of police investigation is successful prosecution and this topic is addressed in a supplementary chapter pertaining to that topic. Throughout the manual, however, we'll discuss specific techniques that police can use to support prosecutions and convictions.

Integration and Application of Training Material

Accompanying each module is a classroom-ready curriculum and set of overheads designed to assist the law enforcement instructor in covering this material. Throughout this curriculum, participants are asked to integrate and apply what they learn by participating in various activities and exercises. Some of these will be discussion-based activities conducted in groups, whereas others will require individual work and performance evaluation.

Research with adult education suggests that we learn:

• 20% of what we hear
• 40% of what we see and hear
• 80% of what we do

For this reason, the curriculum does not only present material visually and orally - it also provides numerous opportunities for participants to become actively involved in the learning.
process. In this way, participants are asked to "do" various tasks involved with successful sexual assault investigation, with the goal of integrating and applying what is learned.

How this Curriculum is Organized

The curriculum is presented entirely on a CD, with files in both Microsoft Word and PowerPoint format. When you open this CD, you will find three main directories:

- Training Program
- Supplemental Materials
- List of Certified Trainers

The content of each directory is described in detail below.

Training Program

The training program directory contains all of the materials developed for each of the following topics:

- DNA Evidence and Issues
- Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault
- Dynamics of Sexual Assault
- Forensic Examination
- Introduction
- Law and Investigative Strategy
- Offender Dynamics
- Preliminary Investigation
- Role of the Victim Advocate
- Unfounded Allegations
- Victim Impact

Within each sub-directory, you will find three files. The first is a content module, containing all of the information pertaining to the topic. These modules are written for law enforcement audiences, and they include information, references, and appendix materials to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relevant issues.
The second file is a curriculum unit, designed to correspond to the content module. This curriculum unit is developed for classroom use, with objectives, activities, and materials included. Both the content modules and curriculum units are written in Microsoft Word format.

The third file in each sub-directory is a set of overheads, that correspond to the curriculum unit and are also intended for classroom use. These overheads are prepared in Microsoft PowerPoint format. All of these materials are developed for use by law enforcement instructors, but they include roles for experts within the field of law enforcement, victim advocacy, and health care.

Supplemental Materials

The directory of supplemental materials includes a variety of additional content chapters, sample search warrants, and other information relevant to the topic of sexual assault investigation. These are found in the various sub-directories:

- Adult Learning
- Communications (Dispatch)
- Coordinated Community Response
- Report Writing
- Special Communities
- Suspect Materials
- Use of the Internet
- Warrants

List of Certified Trainers

Finally, the list of certified trainers includes those individuals who have participated in a special four-day train-the-trainer program hosted by the National Center for Women & Policing. These individuals are recommended as law enforcement trainers, and they include experts from the field of law enforcement, victim advocacy, and health care. For additional information on these certified trainers, please contact the National Center for Women & Policing.