

Engaging Adult Victims of Non-Stranger Sexual Assault

A Law Enforcement Toolkit

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

IDVSA

INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
Center for Social Work Research, School of Social Work

Engaging Adult Victims of Non-Stranger Sexual Assault:

A Law Enforcement Toolkit

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Introduction

This toolkit was developed by The University of Texas at Austin's Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (IDVSA) in partnership with law enforcement professionals, in response to research findings that highlight how a large number of victims of non-stranger sexual assault do not stay engaged in the investigation process. Victims of sexual assault may become disengaged from the criminal justice process after making an initial report for a variety of reasons.

Law enforcement can make small but pivotal changes to what they are doing to engage with victims of sexual assault to increase their motivation to participate in the criminal justice process. These changes can have a reverberating impact on a victim's post-assault experience and contribute to holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes.

From the point in time of an assault onwards, there are many opportunities for improvement if victims are to be well served by the criminal justice, medical, and victim services systems and if perpetrators are to be held accountable. In order to improve the broader community response to sexual assault, action on the part of many other partners and professionals is necessary and goes beyond the scope of this toolkit.

IDVSA

IDVSA has a long history of working with Texas law enforcement related to crimes of interpersonal violence. Five research initiatives inspired and informed the development of the Law Enforcement Toolkit:

- [Outcome Measures for Sexual Assault Services in Texas in 2002](#);
- [Statewide Prevalence Study of Sexual Assault in Texas in 2003](#);
- [Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program: Forging New Victim-Centered Practices in Texas in 2011](#);
- [Sexual Assault Needs Assessment in Texas in 2011](#); and
- [the Houston Sexual Assault Kit project in 2012 and ongoing](#).

Using the Law Enforcement Toolkit

The Law Enforcement Toolkit focuses on:

- How Texas law enforcement agencies may increase and/or improve victim engagement,
- The critical time between a report by an adult victim to law enforcement and launch of a non-stranger sexual assault investigation,
- Maximizing existing resources, while acknowledging financial and human resource constraints, and
- Increasing the likelihood of offender accountability for cases reported to law enforcement (with recognition that only 18% of victims in Texas report to law enforcement¹).

The primary target audience of the Law Enforcement Toolkit is Texas law enforcement—agency chiefs, commanders, sexual assault investigators, and those who supervise law enforcement patrol officers. Law enforcement-based victim services personnel and supervisors of victim services personnel can also benefit from the Law Enforcement Toolkit in their work with investigators and responding officers.

Often non-stranger sexual assault cases include factors that can be obstacles to investigating the case or keeping the victim engaged in the process. Such factors can include drug- and alcohol-facilitated assaults; association with the sex industry (i.e. sex workers); language (non-English speakers); undocumented migrants; and victims who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

¹ Busch-Armendariz, N.B., DiNitto, D.M., Bell, H., Vohra-Gupta, S., & Rhodes, D. (2011). The Prevalence of Sexual Assault: Evidence for Social Work Education and Practice. *Social Work Review* 1, 59-75.

Agency Assessment

How are we doing?

The first step to improving victim engagement is to understand what is working well and what needs improvement in your department. To help get this process underway, we developed a self-assessment tool for agencies to analyze their responses to non-stranger sexual assault crimes and interactions with adult victims of sexual assault during reporting and the early stages of a criminal investigation. Law enforcement agencies, investigative officers, supervisors working sexual assault cases, and victim services professionals can identify and document what they currently do to successfully promote victim engagement as well as opportunities for improvement.²

Using this self-assessment tool can be helpful in:

- Bringing staff together from across the agency to discuss and analyze victim engagement in a structured way;
- Identifying concrete actions an agency can take to improve victim engagement; and
- Collecting baseline information that can be compared with future information to track how the agency is doing over time.

This self-assessment tool addresses five key elements in engaging adult sexual assault victims:

- Sexual Assault Case Audit
- Communication with Victims
- Investigation & Training
- Victim Services
- Agency Policy Review

² This tool is intended for agencies to conduct internally, without outside assistance. For more intensive assessment or third-party perspective, engage outside help by: hiring a consultant to conduct an assessment, partnering with a local college or university researcher, or recruiting an intern to spearhead this specific task. Another example comes from Portland, Oregon's 2007 report from the city auditor, [Sexual assault response and investigation: Portland efforts fall short of a victim-centered approach](#).

Getting Started

Convene an agency working group to administer this self-assessment tool. Consider including supervisors, sexual assault unit investigators, and law enforcement victim services staff. Law enforcement agencies without a sex crimes unit may consider speaking with a supervisor, the victim assistance coordinator, or a crime victim liaison. You may consider reaching out to community-based victim advocates (rape crisis centers).

One Step at a Time: This tool contains five parts. Consider tackling one part at a time and spreading the process out over a specific period of time.

Gather Information: Some of the information requested in this tool will be fairly simple and quick to obtain. Other information may take further digging into existing agency data or will require conversations or meetings with those working sexual assault crimes. Law enforcement agencies may identify additional areas they would like to document or track. Customization of this tool is encouraged. Adapt this tool to reflect the unique realities, concerns and mission of your agency.

Buy-in: To move toward action, it is important that a formal presentation be made to assistant chiefs and commanders.

Annual Review: After initially using the tool, revisit the process annually. This allows leadership and staff to repeat the same process and reflect on the changes previously implemented and/or the need for further changes. It may be useful to re-visit the assessment tool more frequently, particularly when there is new leadership or significant changes in protocols.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Part 1: Sexual Assault Case Audit

Overview of Adult Sexual Assault Cases

Definition of crime: Use this space to document how your agency will define adult sexual assault crimes for the purpose of this assessment. For example, you may choose to use the Texas Penal Code, UCR definitions, or definitions included in your agency protocol.

1 How many reports of sexual assault crimes (adult victims) were received by the agency during the previous calendar year?

2 How many of those reports listed above were related to *non-stranger* sexual assaults (adult victims)?

3 How many of the sexual assault cases (adult victims) initially reported to the agency were subsequently assigned to investigators?

4 How many sexual assaults cases were filed for prosecution?

5 How many sexual assault cases resulted in each of the following dispositions during the previous calendar year? Choose all that apply. (Agency terminology varies. Use the categories that are relevant to your agency protocol.)

■ Cleared exceptionally

■ Cleared by arrest

■ Suspended/Inactivated (not cleared)

■ Suspended (pending prosecutorial review)

■ Unfounded/false (based on investigative findings that crime did not occur)

■ Unfounded/baseless (elements of crime were not met, but not false)

■ Warrant issued (suspended)

■ Unspecified

■ *Other*: List additional possible category for closure, suspension, or clearance of sexual assault cases:

■ *Other*: List additional possible category for closure, suspension, or clearance of sexual assault cases:

HOW ARE WE DOING?

- *Other:* List additional possible category for closure, suspension, or clearance of sexual assault cases:

Case Closure Decision-Making

- 1 Who makes case closure decisions? (For example, responding officer, investigator, sexual assault unit supervisor)

- 2 Do those making case closure decisions receive specific training on case closure options and decision making?

- 3 What options exist for involving multiple perspectives in making case closure decisions? For example, does a supervisor review decisions?

Challenges

- 1 What are the three most common reasons *victims cite* for not participating in the criminal justice process?

- Victim is overwhelmed by investigation and criminal justice process.
- Victim is experiencing trauma.
- Victim has fears of investigation.
- Victim has fears of criminal justice process.
- Victim does not trust law enforcement.
- Victim does not feel believed.
- Victim knows the perpetrator.

Other:

Other:

Other:

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Challenges

2 What are the top three challenges *investigators* cite as reasons for victims not participating in the criminal justice process?

Victim is experiencing trauma.

Cannot find/reach the victim.

Victim knows the perpetrator.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Sexual Assault Case Audit: Take Away

1 How would you rate your agency's current efforts to address the barriers to moving non-stranger sexual assault cases forward?

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Needs Improvement

In what areas?

-
-
-
-

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Part 2: Communication with Victims

Initial Victim Contact

- 1 Does the agency have a written policy, protocol, or guideline related to communication with victims of sexual assault? Yes No
- 2 Within approximately how many hours of a victim making a report to law enforcement does an investigator make contact with the victim?
- 3 Within approximately how many hours of a report do law enforcement-based victim services staff make contact with the victim?
- 4 How many attempts to reach a victim do investigators (or victim services) generally make before closing or suspending a non-stranger sexual assault case?
- 5 What may prevent the initial contact with victims?

Victim Interviews & Sworn Statements

- 1 Where are sworn statements taken?
- 2 Can statements be taken at alternative sites convenient to or requested by victims (such as victim's home or a rape crisis center)? Yes No
- 3 Can victims get bus fare, taxi vouchers, parking, or other transportation assistance to attend sworn statement appointments? Yes No
- 4 Describe any internal policy barriers that prevent investigators from taking the sworn statement at an alternative site convenient to or requested by the victim (such as a workplace, home, rape crisis center).
- 5 What are some of the reasons for interviews not occurring or being prematurely terminated?

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Maintaining Victim Contact

- 1 Does the agency notify a victim when/if a case has been transferred to a new investigator or new unit? *If yes, how?* Yes No

- 2 Does the agency make regular contact with victims, even when there is nothing to report (nothing in the case has progressed)? *If yes, how often? Who makes the contact?* Yes No

- 3 What are the reasons that victim contact may not be maintained throughout the course of the case?

Communicating with Victims: Take Away

- 1 How would you rate your agency's communication with victims in non-stranger sexual assault cases?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Needs Improvement

In what areas?

-
-
-
-

After completing Part 2 of the assessment, review and consider the strategies related to communication included in Section II of the Toolkit.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Part 3: Investigation & Training

Investigator Strategies

1 What are three investigative barriers to non-stranger sexual assault investigations?

A

B

C

Patrol Officer Training

1 What percent of your patrol officers receive specific training on working with sexual assault survivors?

TCLEOSE
hours

Additional
hours

2 How many hours of training do patrol officers receive specific to working with sexual assault survivors?

3 How many hours of training do patrol officers receive on victimization and trauma responses to crimes such as sexual assault?

4 Are free/accessible trainings made available to patrol officers? *By whom?*

Yes

No

5 How are patrol officers made aware of advanced training opportunities?

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Sexual Assault Investigator Training

1	What percent of your investigators receive training on working with sexual assault survivors?	<input type="text"/>	
		TCLEOSE hours	Additional hours
2	How many hours of training do sexual assault investigators receive per year on investigating sexual assault crimes?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3	How many hours of training do sexual assault investigators receive per year on working with sexual assault survivors?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4	How many hours of training do sexual assault investigators receive per year on victimization and trauma responses to crimes such as sexual assault?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5	What opportunities are there for advanced investigative training on sexual assault (including free and web-based trainings)?	<input type="text"/>	
6	Identify funding available to attend conferences or advanced training on sexual assault.	<input type="text"/>	
7	How are investigators made aware of advanced training opportunities on sexual assault?	<input type="text"/>	

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Investigation & Training: Take Away

1 What are the top three training topic areas needed by *patrol officers*?

A

B

C

2 What are the top three training topic areas needed by *sexual assault investigators*?

A

B

C

3 How would you rate your agency's current training efforts?

Excellent

Very Good

Good

Needs Improvement

In what areas?

-
-
-
-

After completing Part 3 of the assessment, review and consider the strategies related to training included in Section II of the Toolkit.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Part 4: Victim Services

Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services

	Yes	No
1 Does the agency have an internal:		
■ Crime victim liaison?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Full-time victim services staff? <i>How many?</i> <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Part-time victim services staff? <i>How many?</i> <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Victim services unit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Are victim services personnel notified upon the report of a sexual assault crime? <i>If so, what are the notification procedures?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="text"/>		
3 Is a victim services staff member permitted in the room during victim interview if requested by the victim?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Is an advocate permitted in the room during victim interview if requested by the victim?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Is any other support person permitted in the room during victim interview if requested by the victim?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Are victim services assigned to sexual assault investigators or a sexual assault unit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Do victim services coordinate or staff cases with sexual assault investigators?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 How do sexual assault investigators or a sexual assault unit coordinate with enforcement-based victim services on sexual assault cases?		
<input type="text"/>		

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Community-Based Victim Advocates

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Are community-based victim advocates notified upon the report of a sexual assault crime?
<i>If so, what are the notification procedures?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> | | |
| 2 How often do representatives of the agency (or of the sexual assault unit, if applicable) meet with community-based advocates (one-on-one or through other meetings such as SART meetings)? | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a year | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every month | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: | | |
| <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> | | |

Sexual Assault Response Teams

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Does your community have a SART (Sexual Assault Response Team)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Does a representative of the sexual assault unit regularly attend SART meetings? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Victims Services: Take Away

1 How would you rate your agency's efforts to coordinate with law enforcement-based victim services?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Needs Improvement

2 What steps are needed to improve coordination between sexual assault investigators and law enforcement-based victim services?

- A
- B
- C

3 How would you rate your agency's efforts to coordinate with community-based victim services and/or a SART?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Needs Improvement

4 What steps are needed to improve coordination between sexual assault investigators and community-based victim services and/or SART?

- A
- B
- C

After completing Part 4 of the assessment, review and consider the strategies related to victim services included in Section II of the Toolkit.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Part 5: Agency Policy Review

	Yes	No
1 Does the agency have a written policy or protocol for responding to sexual assault cases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Does it include a section on:		
■ Definition of sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Call-taker or dispatcher response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Initial officer response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Victim assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Evidence collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Stranger versus non-stranger considerations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Drug-facilitated sexual assault considerations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Victim interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Victim rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Arrest decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Prosecution decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Forensic examinations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Presence of victim advocates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Role of supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

OVERALL ANALYSIS: HOW ARE WE DOING?

	How did you rate your agency?	How is the agency excelling?
Case Audit		
Communication with Victims		
Investigation & Training		
Victim Services		
Agency Policy Review		

OVERALL ANALYSIS: HOW ARE WE DOING?

Areas identified for improvement	Action required to make improvements	Resource/s required to make improvements

Strategies for Taking Action

This section includes three strategy areas essential to improving and maintaining victim engagement in the criminal justice system: Communication, Training, and Victim Services. These recommendations were identified during consultations conducted with Texas law enforcement and professionals working with law enforcement on issues related to sexual assault, as well as from existing law enforcement protocols and resources and research conducted with law enforcement and victims of sexual assault.

Sexual assault victims/survivors participating in IDVSA's [Strategic Approaches to Sexual Assault Kit Evidence](#) study report their initial interaction with criminal justice professionals is critical to their continued engagement. The research findings reiterate the important role of law enforcement in mitigating the possibility of victims feeling inadvertently demeaned, shamed, and blamed by those responding to their report. Findings from the [Sexual Assault Needs Assessment in Texas](#) project³ illustrate that responding officers may benefit from increased knowledge and skills to effectively respond to a sexual assault report, including a deeper understanding of the dynamics of trauma responses exhibited by sexual assault victims/survivors.

³ Busch-Armendariz, N.B., & Vohra-Gupta, S. (2011). Sexual assault needs assessment in Texas: Documenting existing conditions and striving towards preferred outcomes. For the Office of the Governor of Texas, Criminal Justice Division.

Communication

Choose your words.

Develop and distribute simple statements for responding officers, investigators, and victim services personnel to use in early conversations with victims.

Examples:

"I am going to ask you a lot of questions. Sometimes questions can make a person feel as if she is not believed. I don't want you to think that I don't believe you. The reason for my questions is that I need to get all the information about the crime so that we can try to hold this perpetrator accountable."

"I know this is overwhelming. This is not an easy process to deal with, especially after what you've already gone through."

"Many sexual assaults occur when the victim has been drinking or using drugs, and often, the victim blames herself or thinks she will be judged for this. You can be honest with me if alcohol or drugs were involved because it gives me the big picture of what happened."

"I know reporting a sexual assault is hard. It took a lot of courage for you to make this call."

"It's important to document what happened now."

Check it out

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) provides examples on what information to ask from and share with victims, while minimizing the shame and blame victims already feel.

[IACP: Investigating Sexual Assaults Part I: Elements of Sexual Assault & Initial Response \(Training Key #571\)](#)

End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) offers an online training with helpful examples of how to talk about non-consensual sexual contact with a victim.

[EVAWI: Effective Report Writing: Using the Language of Non-Consensual Sex \(Online Training Course 01\)](#)

This EVAWI module provides officers with helpful ways to respond to victims of sexual assault to normalize and validate their reactions to sexual assault.

[EVAWI: Dynamics: What Does Sexual Assault Really Look Like? \(Online Training Course 02\)](#)

Maintain communication.

Establish a communications policy to guide communication with victims following the initial report. Consider the following:

- Investigators or victim services make contact with the victim within 24 hours of receiving a report. Investigators' or victim services' professional judgment and/or agency policy may dictate waiting another day, for example when a victim reports the assault in the middle of the night, followed by several hours at the emergency department for the sexual assault exam.
- Return all phone calls from victims.
- Repeat attempts to establish or reestablish communication and schedule appointments with the victim.
- Maintain regular contact (i.e. monthly) with victims even when nothing in the case has progressed.
- Inform the victim when and if her or his case is transferred to a new investigator.

Check it out

IACP provides an example of law enforcement policy related to communicating with victims of sexual assault. The model policy covers model practices for 911 call-takers and dispatchers, initial officer responses, and preliminary investigative interviews, among other topics.

[IACP: Model Policy](#)

Consider where investigators conduct interviews.

Consider scheduling interviews at a time and location agreed to or suggested by the victim. This strategy acknowledges victims' potential trauma response and fears of being judged, as well as any barriers related to work schedules, child care, and/or transportation.

- Use victim services to assist with transportation for victims who do not have access to a personal vehicle.
- Schedule interview appointments at an alternative location, such as the local rape crisis center, victim's work place, or victim's home.

Consider how to best make the victim feel safe and comfortable when it is feasible for a victim of sexual assault to come to agency facilities. For example, consider where they park, the entrance to the building safeguarding victims' privacy (possibly through a separate entrance than that used by suspects and other visitors), and the presence of victim services personnel. Use their coming to the agency as an opportunity to demystify law enforcement and to build rapport.

Create an internal feedback loop between investigators, responding officers, and law enforcement-based victim services.

Create a system to provide constructive feedback to responding officers on how their initial interactions with victims may have affected the victim's continued engagement with the criminal justice process. Sexual assault investigators or victim services personnel may contact the responding officer on a case to let her or him know how the case has moved forward.

Providing internal feedback may be a formal, structured process or entail more informal encouragement that unit supervisors provide. It may take different forms:

- Share constructive feedback verbally or in writing (via e-mail, note, etc.) about the responding officer's initial interaction when it is spontaneously shared by a victim, victim services personnel, or other party.
- Create a system of documenting feedback about the responding officer's initial interaction. This feedback may have been shared spontaneously by the victim, victim services personnel, or an investigator, or it may have been purposefully solicited as part of a deliberate unit-wide process.

Check it out

EVAWI offers a resource for law enforcement regarding best practice for whether or not to take a sworn statement from a victim.

[EVAWI: Best Practices: Sworn Statements](#)

EVAWI presents a module on communicating an attitude of competence and compassion during a victim interview. These lessons can inform policies/protocols that create an investigative environment that is victim-sensitive.

[EVAWI: Interviewing the Victim: Techniques Based on the Realistic Dynamics of Sexual Assault \(Online Training Course 06\)](#)

Check it out

IACP describes the roles of varying professionals in the investigative process. This can be used as a guide to improve communication in the process between investigators, officers, and victim services professionals.

[IACP: Investigating Sexual Assaults Part I: Elements of Sexual Assault & Initial Response \(Training Key #571\)](#)

EVAWI describes effective ways to communicate with victims who have been traumatized and have fears about participating in the process.

[EVAWI: Victim Impact: How do Sexual Assault Victims Respond? \(Online Training Course 03\) and Interviewing the Victim: Techniques Based on the Realistic Dynamics of Sexual Assault \(Online Training Course 06\)](#)

Implement a supervisory review of case closures and clearances.

Create a system to support case closure decision making. This may involve a review by the unit supervisor or an alternative person to review and discuss case disposition.

Check it out

EVAWI provides information for officers, investigators, and supervisors who make decisions regarding how to clear or otherwise close sexual assault cases.

[EVAWI: Clearance Methods for Sexual Assault Cases \(Online Training Course 10\)](#)

Solicit feedback from victims.

Establish a system to solicit feedback from victims, i.e. victim satisfaction surveys.

Victim feedback may be used to evaluate the response received from law enforcement and to generate ideas for improving performance and/or acknowledging exceptional performance.

Check it out

EVAWI provides three examples of victim satisfaction surveys for victims to evaluate the performance of various professionals who respond to their needs. One example is specifically designed for police response to victims of sexual assault and is available in English and Spanish.

[EVAWI: Evaluation: Victim Satisfaction Surveys](#)

Conduct a review of agency policy or protocol.

Review your agency policy or protocol regarding adult sexual assault crimes. Using the IACP model policy as a guide, determine which policy sections your agency is missing and decide which to implement, based on your greatest needs and available resources.

Check it out

The IACP Model Policy outlines the initial officer response to a sexual assault report, which includes requesting assistance from detectives, field evidence technicians, crime laboratory personnel, and the prosecuting attorney when appropriate.

[IACP: Model Policy](#)

Training

Provide periodic roll-call training for patrol officers.

Periodic roll-call training for patrol officers planned throughout the calendar year can help refresh information and skills patrol officers need to respond effectively to sexual assault crimes.

Check it out

The three-part roll-call video series developed and made available online and free of charge by the IACP provides a useful resource. The video is intended to help law enforcement officers reframe sexual assault crimes, identify victim trauma, and provide information about victim behavior (including delayed reporting, alcohol or substance abuse, and encounters that start out consensually and end in assault). This video is accompanied by a discussion guide to use with audiences after screening the video. The 14-minute first segment, “Realities of Sexual Assault,” is particularly useful in a roll-call setting or other opportunity for brief interaction with patrol officers.

[IACP: Roll-Call Training Video](#)

Provide specialized trainings to patrol officers and sexual assault investigators on specific topics related to improved victim engagement.

Identify opportunities and resources available through the agency. Consider collaborative efforts with your local prosecutor’s office, rape crisis center, and/or the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault.

Identify the time that could be allotted to increasing patrol officers’ or investigators’ awareness and skills related to sexual assault crimes.

Identify specific topics based on officers’ needs. Three training topics particularly useful to improving victim engagement are:

- Sexual Assault Reporting
- Sexual Assault Interview Techniques
- Sexual Assault Trauma Response

Check it out

The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) delivers multiple training webinars each year, and many are related to law enforcement’s response. EVAWI offers a comprehensive series of webinars available online free of charge.

There are also multiple trainings provided for free through webinars and through the Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigators Course (SAFVIC) Program, which is administered by the Texas Municipal Police Association (TMPA).

[TAASA: Training & Technical Assistance](#)

[TAASA: eLearning Program](#)

[EVAWI: Online Training Institute](#)

[SAFVIC: The Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigators Course](#)

SECTION II: STRATEGIES FOR TAKING ACTION

Based on an assessment of available resources, time constraints, and needs of officers, identify the type of training to offer. Possibilities include:

- Roll-call video
- Webinar
- In-person trainer from within the agency
- In-person trainer from external organization

Consider setting a training standard for your agency on sexual assault, for example:

- number of hours over and above the hours required
- additional training for patrol officers
- advanced investigative training for investigators

Provide 24/7 on-call support to patrol officers.

Agencies can provide 24/7 on-call support to responding officers by making available experienced sexual assault investigators and/or law enforcement victim services personnel. Some agencies encourage responding officers to contact an on-call sexual assault investigator for questions and direction.

On-call support can help guide responding officers who may not respond to sexual assault cases frequently to:

- Understand agency protocol related to sexual assault crimes
- Provide accurate and clear information to the victim
- Ask the right questions
- Gather necessary information and evidence
- Make appropriate referrals to sexual assault medical exams and community resources

This type of on-the-spot on-call support may also provide guidance on more subtle aspects of sexual assault crimes. For example, guidance may center on sensitive issues that ultimately either facilitate or hinder victims' continued engagement with the criminal justice system, such as:

- the importance of first impressions in developing rapport with victims
- suspending judgment about the victim's story or credibility

Check it out

The IACP Model Policy outlines the initial officer response to a sexual assault report, which includes requesting assistance from detectives, field evidence technicians, crime laboratory personnel, and the prosecuting attorney when appropriate.

[IACP: Model Policy](#)

EVAWI outlines how patrol officers can utilize victim services during the preliminary interview period to provide emotional support to the victim and address safety issues as the officer performs their duties.

[EVAWI: Preliminary Investigation: Guidelines for First Responders \(Online Training Course 04\)](#)

Review and share reporting options within your agency.

It is critical that dispatchers, responding officers, and investigators understand and convey the choices available to victims related to reporting, forensic evidence collection, the pace of an investigative process, and the respective roles of law enforcement and victims in the process.

Raise awareness at all levels of law enforcement about victims' options to make anonymous reports and/or to participate in Texas' Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program (created in 2009 by House Bill 2626 and found under Article 56.065 of the Code of Criminal Procedure). The program allows victims of sexual assault to receive a medical forensic exam and to have that evidence stored for two years by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) without making a report to law enforcement. During this period of time, victims may decide to make a report to law enforcement and have their evidence forwarded to their local law enforcement agency from DPS.

Consider establishing a blind reporting option. This option is detailed in the IACP Model Policy as a way to respond to victims' emotional and physical barriers to continued commitment to the investigative process. A blind reporting option allows victims to take the investigation process one step at a time in order to establish trust with the investigator.

Check it out

The Texas Department of Public Safety has a webpage dedicated to the Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program.

[Texas Department of Public Safety—Non-Reported Sexual Assault Evidence Program](#)

TAASA developed a useful informational brochure related to the Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program.

[TAASA: Sexual Assault Examinations Without Police Involvement \(Brochure, in English and Spanish\)](#)

The Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (IDVSA) at The University of Texas at Austin produced a report titled Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program: Forging New Victim-Centered Practices in Texas in June 2011).

[IDVSA: Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program: Forging New Victim-Centered Practices in Texas](#)

The [Hopelaws.org](#) public service announcement promotes the message that people who have had unwanted sexual experiences can get medical attention without police involvement. The PSA states a person has this option, but also encourages a report to law enforcement.

[Sexual Assault Legal Services & Assistance—Non-Report Sexual Assault Examination \(Public Service Announcement\)](#)

The Ashland Police Department in Oregon provides a model of how to give a victim multiple options to report a sex crime, including "complete investigation," "partial investigation," or "information only report," with the choice of utilizing an online reporting form.

[Ashland Police Department Sexual Assault Reporting—You Have Options](#)

Victim Services

Develop and strengthen existing protocols for coordinating with victim services personnel.

Victim services professionals are often in strategic positions to complement and augment law enforcement's efforts to engage victims in the criminal justice process.⁴ Victim services can play an important role beyond the initial crisis intervention during reporting and provide information and support on a continuing and long-term basis. Strong coordination and communication with victim services can also improve the degree to which victims receive clear and consistent information about the criminal justice process, what choices they have, and what to expect.

Strengthen coordination between law enforcement and victim services professionals by developing formal mechanisms for information sharing and collaboration.

For example:

- Give victim services professionals access to sexual assault reports through the law enforcement report database.
- Require victim services professionals to write supplemental reports on interactions with victims to keep investigators informed.
- Assess the implications of the limits of confidentiality for victim services professionals in a law-enforcement setting.
- Train victim services professionals on how to testify if their records are subpoenaed.
- Create a protocol in which a victim services professional is assigned to every case to support an investigator with assisting a victim.

⁴ Law enforcement agencies vary widely across Texas, in terms of the size and capacity of agency-based victim services units. Some sexual assault units have victim services personnel directly assigned to the unit, while others may have a single crime victim's liaison for the entire agency, as outlined in Chapter 56 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures. Likewise, law enforcement partnerships with community-based victim services (such as rape crisis centers) and the development of Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs) vary widely from community to community.

Check it out

Chapter 56 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedures lays out the rights of victims of crime, including sexual assault. This chapter also requires that local law enforcement agencies designate someone to serve as the agency's crime victim liaison and ensure that crime victim's rights are recognized.

[Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 56](#)

The IACP Model Policy recommends that investigating officers contact victim services or a victim advocate as soon as possible. In the event that a victim declines contact with an advocate, officers should provide victims with written referrals to relevant community resources.

[IACP: Model Policy](#)

IACP discusses the importance of the investigator's understanding of the role of victim services. This can help law enforcement to effectively utilize victim services professionals in various settings. IACP discusses how victim services professionals do not have the right to privileged communication, and considerations for the implications.

[IACP: Investigating Sexual Assaults Part I: Elements of Sexual Assault & Initial Response \(Training Key #571\)](#)

EVAWI presents training resources on victim advocacy.

[EVAWI: Effective Victim Advocacy Within the Criminal Justice System \(Online Training Course 12\) and Breaking Barriers: The Role of Community Based and Systems Based Victim Advocates \(Online Training Course 13\)](#)

Texas Victim Services Association (TVSA) is a professional organization for victim service providers in Texas. Its annual conference and training workshops specifically address law enforcement-based victim services, including how the agency can best fulfill the statutory responsibilities of the crime victim liaison and best practices for law enforcement-based victim services.

www.txvsa.org

Establish a SART or establish relationships with an existing SART.

A Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) or Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team (SARRT) is a multidisciplinary, interagency team of professionals who respond to sexual assault. The goal of a SART is to develop coordinated, community-wide responses to sexual assault.

- Initiate contact with existing local SART, if one exists in your jurisdiction.
- Send one or more representatives from the sexual assault unit or agency to all SART meetings.
- If no SART exists, initiate discussions on implementation with local partners including partners at the local rape crisis center, other advocates, law enforcement officers, sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs), forensic laboratory personnel, and prosecutors.

Check it out

The Office for Victims of Crime provides a SART Toolkit as a resource for communities considering a SART response and for communities that want to improve an existing coordinated response.

[SART Toolkit: Resources for Sexual Assault Response Teams](#)

EVAWI provides best practice information on SARRTs, with example tools to assess readiness for SART development, guide implementation, and enhance sustainability, and conduct an evaluation.

[EVAWI: Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team](#)

Catalog of Resources

Law Enforcement

Basic Peace Officer Training (#1000)

TEXAS COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER STANDARDS AND EDUCATION (TCLEOSE)

Includes 10 hours on victims of crime, 20 hours on family violence and assaults, and 44 hours on criminal investigation (which includes sexual assault)

www.tcleose.state.tx.us/index.cfm

Special Investigative Topics (#3232)

TCLEOSE

Special investigative topics, specific to child abuse, sexual assault, sexual predators

www.tcleose.state.tx.us/index.cfm

Human Trafficking & Advanced Human Trafficking in Texas (#3270 & #3271)

TCLEOSE

Human trafficking courses, cover sexual assault minimally

www.tcleose.state.tx.us/index.cfm

The Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigators Course

Covers first responder to investigation, including all laws that pertain to sexual assault and family violence, protective orders, dynamics of family violence and sexual assault

www.safvic.org

Roll-Call Training Video

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE (IACP)

Roll-call training video and 3-page video discussion guide; Segment 1: Realities of Sexual Assault; Segment 2: Effectively Preparing Cases; Segment 3: Working the Case: Techniques and Collaboration.

www.theiacp.org/Portals/0/pdfs/Investigating-Sexual-Assault-Training-Video-Discussion-Guide.pdf

Supplemental Report Form

IACP

Sexual Assault Guidelines: Supplemental Report Form and Investigative Strategies—Supplemental Report Form
theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CHt0qVEWYus%3d&tabid=392

Incident Reports and Investigative Strategies

IACP

Sexual Assault Guidelines: Supplemental Report Form and Investigative Strategies—includes 8-page Sexual assault incident reports: investigative strategies

theiacp.org/tabid/299/Default.aspx?id=1143&v=1

Investigating Sexual Assaults Part I: Elements of Sexual Assault & Initial Response (Training Key #571)

IACP

This Training Key addresses investigative procedures and best practices for investigating sexual assaults and working with victims of sexual violence.

www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=1NtZ%2bH4fFc%3d&tabid=392

Investigating Sexual Assaults Part II: Investigative Procedures (Training Key #572)

IACP

Sexual Assault Guidelines: Supplemental Report Form and Investigative Strategies

www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=JK0TYfpVhkl%3d&tabid=87

Investigating Sexual Assaults Part III: Investigative Strategy & Prosecution (Training Key #573)

IACP

Designed to help officers and investigators determine what “type” of sexual assault case they are handling, predict which defense is most likely to be raised, and guide an investigative strategy toward overcoming that particular defense.

www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=gbF5VqzEZIQ%3d&tabid=87

Pretext Phone Calls in Sexual Assault Investigations (Training Key #574)

IACP

The “pretext” phone call is an investigative tool that can be used in a wide variety of criminal investigations. It can be especially effective in sexual assault investigations, including drug-facilitated rapes.

www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=b4en4XkfWVo%3d&tabid=372

SECTION III: CATALOG OF RESOURCES

Model Policy

IACP

Investigating Sexual Assaults Model Policy

www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=yAucEKAs3dU%3d&tabid=372

Concepts and Issues Paper for Model Policy

IACP

This Concepts and Issues Paper was developed to accompany IACP's Model Policy on Investigating Sexual Assaults and addresses field investigative procedures and best practices for working with victims.

www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=z5xGuy0ksGo%3d&tabid=87

Effective Report Writing: Using the Language of Non-Consensual Sex (Online Training Course 01)

END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN INTERNATIONAL (EVAWI)

This module addresses how law enforcement conduct sexual assault investigations and how to provide prosecutors with a thorough, written report in order to support the charges.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Dynamics: What Does Sexual Assault Really Look Like? (Online Training Course 02)

EVAWI

This module examines the persistent myths and misconceptions about rape, rape victims, and rape perpetrators, the reasons for them, and how they affect the investigation of sexual assault.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Victim Impact: How Do Sexual Assault Victims Respond? (Online Training Course 03)

EVAWI

This module describes the symptoms and stages often experienced by sexual assault victims. This is provided in order to assist LE and others in understanding the behavior of sexual assault victims and conducting their investigation in the most sensitive and effective way.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Preliminary Investigation: Guidelines for First Responders (Online Training Course 04)

EVAWI

This module accompanies the IACP's Model Policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide officers and investigators with guidelines for responding to reports of SA, assisting victims, collaborating with local health and service agencies, and conducting interviews with victims, witnesses, and suspects.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Law and Investigative Strategy: What Kind of Sexual Assault is This? (Online Training Course 05)

EVAWI

Although penal code definitions of criminal sex offenses vary, most are conceptually similar and can be understood by analyzing their elements. By following the charts and making a series of decisions, investigators can determine which specific crime was committed and frame the investigative strategy based on the defense that is most likely to be raised.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Interviewing the Victim: Techniques Based on the Realistic Dynamics of Sexual Assault (Online Training Course 06)

EVAWI

This module walks through the stages and techniques for successfully interviewing the victim of a sexual assault and provides detailed guidance for communicating an attitude of competence and compassion during a successful victim interview.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

False Reports: Moving Beyond the Issue to Successfully Investigate and Prosecute (Online Training Course 07)

EVAWI

This module confronts the difficult question of false reporting, challenging some of the "red flags" that often raise suspicion among criminal justice professionals and members of the general public.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Reporting Methods for Sexual Assault Cases (Online Training Course 09)

EVAWI

This module provides information for officers and investigators who make difficult decisions regarding how to record a report of a sexual assault. This module discusses the implications of this important decision, because they determine whether or not it will need to be officially cleared or closed once all of the investigative leads are exhausted.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Clearance Methods for Sexual Assault Cases (Online Training Course 10)

EVAWI

This module provides information for officers, investigators, and supervisors who make decisions regarding how to clear or otherwise close sexual assault cases. This module discusses ways in which a sexual assault case can be cleared or otherwise closed, and how some are not really closed but simply suspended or inactivated.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

SECTION III: CATALOG OF RESOURCES

Effective Victim Interviewing (webinar)

EVAWI

This webinar walks participants through the stages and techniques for successfully interviewing sexual assault victims, providing guidance on how to conduct a competent and compassionate interview, while being mindful of the varying ways the victim may present.

www.evawintl.org/PAGEID4/Forensic-Compliance

Best Practices: Sworn Statements

EVAWI

This is a resource for law enforcement regarding best practices for whether or not to take a sworn statement from a victim.

www.evawintl.org/PAGEID14/Best-Practices/FAQs/Sworn-Statements

Sex Crimes Investigations Training

SOUTHERN POLICE INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

This course has been developed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the first responder as well as the criminal investigator. The curriculum has specific investigative skill-based instruction designed to build on prior training and experience. The overview of sex-related crimes, sex offenders, and sexual perversions are presented from an investigative perspective.

louisville.edu/spi/courses/ce-courses/sci

Sexual Assault Without Police Involvement

TEXAS ASSOCIATION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

This brochure aims to inform law enforcement, advocates, sexual assault nurse examiners, and victims about recent changes in the law to facilitate sexual assault examinations without police involvement.

www.taasa.org/images/materials/nonreport_eng.pdf?PHPSESSID=7ab885c4113420b3d4a4b24e65fb9438

Eliminating Barriers: A Guide for Law Enforcement

TAASA

This brochure aims to inform law enforcement about the unique concerns and barriers that different populations face when reporting a sexual assault, including language, age group, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, and residency status.

www.taasa.org/images/materials/EliminatingBarriers.pdf

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs)

International Association of Forensic Nurses

IAFN is an international membership organization composed of forensic nurses working around the world and other professionals who support and compliment the work of forensic nursing. The mission of the IAFN is to provide leadership in forensic nursing practice by developing, promoting, and disseminating information internationally about forensic nursing science.

www.forensicnurse.org

EVAWI Nursing Accreditation

Course accreditation for the California Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) Provider #15641 covers the modules: Effective Report Writing: Using the Language of Non-Consensual Sex; Dynamics: What Does Sexual Assault Really Look Like?; Victim Impact: How Victims are Affected by Sexual Assault and How Law Enforcement Can Respond Successfully; Preliminary Investigation: Guidelines for First Responders, Law & Investigative Strategy, Interviewing the Victim, False Reports; Sustaining a Coordinated Community Response: SARRT, Reporting Methods, Clearance Methods, SARRT, Victim Advocacy in the Criminal Justice System

www.evawintl.org/nursingaccreditation.aspx

Prosecutors

Prosecuting Sexual Assault Cases

NATIONAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S ASSOCIATION

This training addresses the unique issues in sexual assault cases from evidence and trial advocacy, to victim issues and ethics.

www.ndaa.org/sexual_violence_training.html

Aequitas: The Prosecutors' Resource on Violence Against Women

Aequitas' mission is to improve the quality of justice in sexual violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, and human trafficking cases by developing, evaluating, and refining prosecution practices that increase victim safety and offender accountability. They offer training and technical assistance.

www.aequitasresource.org

Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs)

Sustaining a Coordinated Community Response: Sexual Assault Response and Resource Teams (SARRT) (Online Training Course 08)

EVAWI

This module provides information on meeting the complex and sensitive crime of sexual assault through the coordinated response of a SARRT. The purpose of this training module is to guide communities in overcoming challenges to responding to sexual assault—by improving the coordination of services for victims across professional disciplines and agencies. Particular attention focuses on the long-term objectives that a SARRT can pursue to sustain these coordination efforts over time.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Sexual Assault Response and Resource Teams (SARRT): A Guide for Rural and Remote Communities (Online Training Course 11)

EVAWI

The purpose of this module is to guide rural and remote communities in overcoming challenges by improving coordination of services for victims across professional disciplines. This module outlines the many benefits of SARRTs for rural and remote communities. The module is has suggestions for how to start, nurture, and expand a SARRT in any community.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner—Sexual Assault Response Team

The goal of this website is to provide information and technical assistance to individuals and institutions interested in developing new SANE-SART programs or improving existing ones.

www.sane-sart.com

SART Toolkit: Resources for Sexual Assault Response Teams

Establishing a SART—1. Build your SART, 2. Collect data, 3. Create a strategic plan, 4. Determine Communications standards, 5. Hold Team Meetings, 6. Monitor/Evaluate, 7. Sustains, etc. Put the Focus on Victims: 1. Understand Victims, 2. Consider Culture & Diversity, 3. Help Victims Heal, etc. Follow Innovative Practice & Tools.

ovc.ncjrs.gov/sartkit/

SART Toolkit: SARTS at Work (video)

An introduction to the SART approach

ovc.ncjrs.gov/sartkit/about-video.html

Sexual Assault Response and Resource Team

EVAWI

This website provides best practice information on SARRTs, with example tools to assess readiness for SART development, guide implementation, and enhance sustainability, and conduct an evaluation.

www.evawintl.org/PAGEID7/Best-Practices/Resources/SARRTs

Multidisciplinary Resources

Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS (OAG)

Information on local services for survivors, sexual assault nurse examiners, and Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs).

www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/sapcs.shtml#certification

Virtual Training and Other Sexual Assault Resources for Professionals

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

List of resources and tools for online and virtual training to improve response to sexual assault for SANEs, prosecutors, and other professionals.

www.nij.gov/nij/journals/264/SANE-virtual-training.htm

The Neurobiology of Sexual Assault: Implications for First Responders in Law Enforcement, Prosecution, and Victim Advocacy (webinar)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

Dr. Campbell brings together research on the neurobiology of trauma and the criminal justice response to sexual assault. She explains the underlying neurobiology of traumatic events, its emotional and physical manifestation, and how these processes can impact the investigation and prosecution of sexual assaults. Real-world, practical implications are examined for first responders, such as law enforcement, nurses, prosecutors, and advocates.

www.nij.gov/nij/events/research-real-world.htm

Cambria County Sexual Assault Protocol

Roles & Responsibilities of Responders: Law Enforcement Officer, Victim Advocate, SANE, Prosecutor, Protocol Checklists for Responders, Appendices, include: Common Reactions to SA, Facts about Drug Facilitated Sexual Assault

www.evawintl.org/images/uploads/Cambria_SA_Protocol_Revised_10-12.pdf

End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI)

Website offers education on gender-based violence, support for victims, holding perpetrators accountable. Focus on victim-centered, multidisciplinary collaboration.

www.evawintl.org

Evaluation: Victim Satisfaction Surveys

EVAWI

Website provides examples of victim satisfaction surveys. One is designed for victims to evaluate the performance of various professionals (SART nurse, police officer/detective, and rape crisis advocate). Another is designed to evaluate patient satisfaction with health care providers. The final example is for the police response to victims of sexual assault (English and Spanish).

www.evawintl.org/PAGEID10/Best-Practices/Resources/Evaluation

Effective Victim Advocacy Within the Criminal Justice System (Online Training Course 12)

EVAWI

This training emphasizes the importance of cross-disciplinary cooperation; clarifies the role of victim advocates particularly in their work with the criminal justice system; discusses the role of victim advocates and differences between community-based and system-based advocates; and provides strategies for advocates to work on behalf of victims within the criminal justice system.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Breaking Barriers: The Role of Community-Based and System-Based Victim Advocates (Online Training Course 13)

EVAWI

This module is for advocates as well as the other professionals who respond to sexual assault, such as law enforcement officers, health care providers, and prosecutors. The training is focused on clarifying the role of victim advocates, particularly with respect to the similarities and differences between community and system-based advocates.

olti.evawintl.org/Courses.aspx

Regional Training: Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Investigation and Prosecution

EVAWI

These regional training conferences are designed to complement our international conference that we host once a year, as well as our OnLine Training Institute (OLTI) and webinar events, to offer a range of training options for professionals in the field. Regional training conferences address the fundamentals of how to improve the investigation and prosecution of sexual assault and domestic violence.

www.evawintl.org/RegionalConferences.aspx

Training Bulletin: Words Matter—Suggested Guidelines on Language Use for Sexual Assault

EVAWI

This document provides recommendations for language use on sexual assault for professionals. It can help to improve verbal and written communications in order to provide information with accuracy and clarity, while avoiding confusion, misinformation, and contributing to doubt and victim-blaming.

www.evawintl.org/images/uploads/Language%20Use%20for%20Sexual%20Assault%2006-12-13.pdf

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Texas Association Against Sexual Assault

TAASA's goals are to assist sexual assault survivors and to create a Texas free from sexual violence. TAASA advocates for individual sexual assault survivors as well as sexual assault programs collectively. Advocacy includes supporting legislation favorable to victims and strengthening laws against sexual predators, advocating for increased funding for sexual assault programs at both the federal and state levels, and providing trainings/conferences.

www.taasa.org

Training & Technical Assistance

TAASA

TAASA provides training on a variety of sexual assault issues and related topics that apply to advocates, counselors, criminal justice and the general public.

www.taasa.org/programs/training

Texas Association Against Sexual Assault eLearning Program

TAASA

The TAASA eLearning Program offers expanded training options for advocates and law enforcement. Available courses can be taken at a time and location that's convenient for you, without any cost or travel.

www.taasaelearning.org

Texas Victim Services Association

TVSA is a professional organization for victim service providers in Texas. Its annual conference and training workshops specifically address law enforcement-based victim services, including how the agency can best fulfill the statutory responsibilities of the crime victim liaison and best practices for law enforcement-based victim services.

www.txvsa.org

Sexual Assault Reporting: You Have Options

ASHLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

Gives a victim multiple options to report a sex crime, including "complete investigation," "partial investigation," or "information only report," with the choice of utilizing an online reporting form.

www.reportingoptions.org

Portland Audit Sexual Assault Response and Investigation: Portland efforts fall short of a victim-centered approach (report)

PORTLAND CITY AUDITOR

This report contains the results of an audit of Portland's investigations and response to sexual assaults. It makes recommendations to the SART to address the issues described.

www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=158873

Chapter 56 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure

Code of Criminal Procedure. 56. Rights of Crime Victims. Subchapter A: Rights of Crime Victims, Subchapter B: Crime Victims' Compensation

www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/SOTWDocs/CR/htm/CR.56.htm

Sexual assault kits

Working with Victims in Cold Hit DNA Cases (webinar)

NATIONAL CENTER FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME (NCVC)

Webinar presented by a law enforcement professional and a victim advocate team about their work with sexual assault survivors in cold hit DNA cases.

victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/dna-resource-center/dna-training-opportunities/past-training-events

Using DNA in Non-Stranger Sexual Assault Cases (webinar)

NCVC

Most victim advocates are familiar with the importance of using DNA in stranger rape cases, but many may not understand how DNA can be used effectively in court in non-stranger sexual assault cases.

victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/dna-resource-center/dna-training-opportunities/past-training-events

Untested Sexual Assault Kits: Improving the Response to Victims Through Research and Technical Assistance (webinar)

NCVC

Webinar discussing methods used to improve the field's response to victims after a sexual assault kit backlog has been discovered.

victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/dna-resource-center/dna-training-opportunities/past-training-events

Supporting Survivors After an Exoneration (webinar)

NCVC

This webinar covers the impact of DNA exonerations and wrongful convictions on survivors of crime. The presenter shares her experience working with survivors in cases that result in DNA (and other) exonerations and provides tips and tools for providing support throughout the process.

victimsofcrime.org/our-programs/dna-resource-center/dna-training-opportunities/past-training-events

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Sexual Assault Examinations Without Police Involvement (brochure, in English and Spanish)

TEXAS ASSOCIATION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

This brochure describes Texas' new law that a police report is not required for a person to get a sexual assault examination.

www.taasa.org/images/materials/nonreport_eng.pdf?PHPSESSID=c1b6eb2429552dcbefd911bc06bd1da2 www.taasa.org/images/materials/nonreport_span.pdf

Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program: Forging New Victim-Centered Practices in Texas (Report)

THE INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

This report describes the findings from an evaluation of the Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program in Texas, which allows sexual assault victims throughout Texas to obtain sexual assault medical forensic examinations without making a report to law enforcement and at no cost.

www.utexas.edu/ssw/dl/files/cswr/institutes/idvsa/publications/NRSAFE.pdf

Non-Reported Sexual Assault Evidence Program

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

The Non-Reported Sexual Assault Evidence Program was created in House Bill 2626 by the 81st Legislature in 2009. The program allows survivors of a sexual assault to obtain a forensic medical exam and have evidence collected, without cost to the victim, even if they do not wish to involve law enforcement personnel at the time of its collection. This will secure the evidence while giving the survivor time to consider if they want to report the assault. The bill also requires the Department to transfer and preserve the evidence for either two years or until the victim releases the evidence, whichever comes first.

www.txdps.state.tx.us/CrimeLaboratory/NRSA.htm

Public messages on sexual assault

Sexual Assault Information (website)

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON POLICE

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY POLICE SERVICES

EVAWI described the University of Washington Police' and the Central Washington University Police Service's website as a good example of a police department website or public service announcement, providing a victim-centered message regarding sexual assault. The website describes sexual assault as a serious problem on college campuses and resources for victims. See also: www.evawintl.org/PAGEID13/Best-Practices/FAQs/Police-Department-Website

www.washington.edu/admin/police/prevention/sexoffense
www.cwu.edu/police/sexual-assault-response-commitment

Sexual Assault Information (website)

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT SEX CRIMES UNIT

EVAWI described the Austin Police Department Sex Crimes Unit as a good example of a police department website or public service announcement, providing a victim-centered message regarding sexual assault. The website describes the Sex Crimes Unit's motto as "We believe" and options for sexual assault victims. See also: www.evawintl.org/PAGEID13/Best-Practices/FAQs/Police-Department-Website
austintexas.gov/department/sex-crimes

Sexual Assault Legal Services & Assistance: Non-Report Sexual Assault Examination (public service announcement)

This public service announcement describes that people who have had unwanted sexual experiences can get medical attention without police involvement. It emphasizes that victims have options and choices, but also encourages victims to report to law enforcement.

www.hopelaws.org/legal/criminal-cases/460-2/

Sexual Assault Public Service Announcement Without Slate Video (Video)

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT SEX CRIMES UNIT

This public service announcement depicts the barriers that people experience when thinking about reporting a sexual assault.

www.austintexas.gov/department/sex-crimes

Start by Believing (public awareness campaign)

EVAWI

Start by Believing is a public awareness campaign focused on the public response to sexual assault. Because a friend or family member is typically the first person a victim confides in after an assault, each individual's personal reaction is the first step in a long path toward justice and healing. Knowing how to respond is critical—a negative response can worsen the trauma and foster an environment where sexual assault predators face zero consequences for their crimes.

www.startbybelieving.org

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- Houston Police Department, Adult Sex Crimes Unit
- Assistant Chief Mary Lentschke, Houston Police Department
- Kim Lonsway, PhD, End Violence Against Women International
- Derrellynn Perryman, Arlington Police Department
- Chief Investigator Wayne Springer, 38th Judicial District Attorney
- Mike Sweeney, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
- Assistant Chief Gary Teeler, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Victim Services Association
- The University of Texas at Austin Police Department
- Bill Wells, PhD, Sam Houston State University
- Lynn Westbrook, The University of Texas at Austin, School of Information

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

IDVSA

INSTITUTE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
Center for Social Work Research, School of Social Work

The mission of the Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (IDVSA) is to advance the knowledge of domestic violence and sexual assault in an effort to end interpersonal violence. IDVSA accomplishes this through research, education, training and technical assistance, collaboration with university and practitioner communities, and the community at large.

It is the vision of IDVSA that its multi-disciplinary, researcher-practitioner, collaborative approach will enhance the quality and relevance of research efforts and their application in service provision. That vision has been realized in our recent research focus in the areas of human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and resiliency in service providers.

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