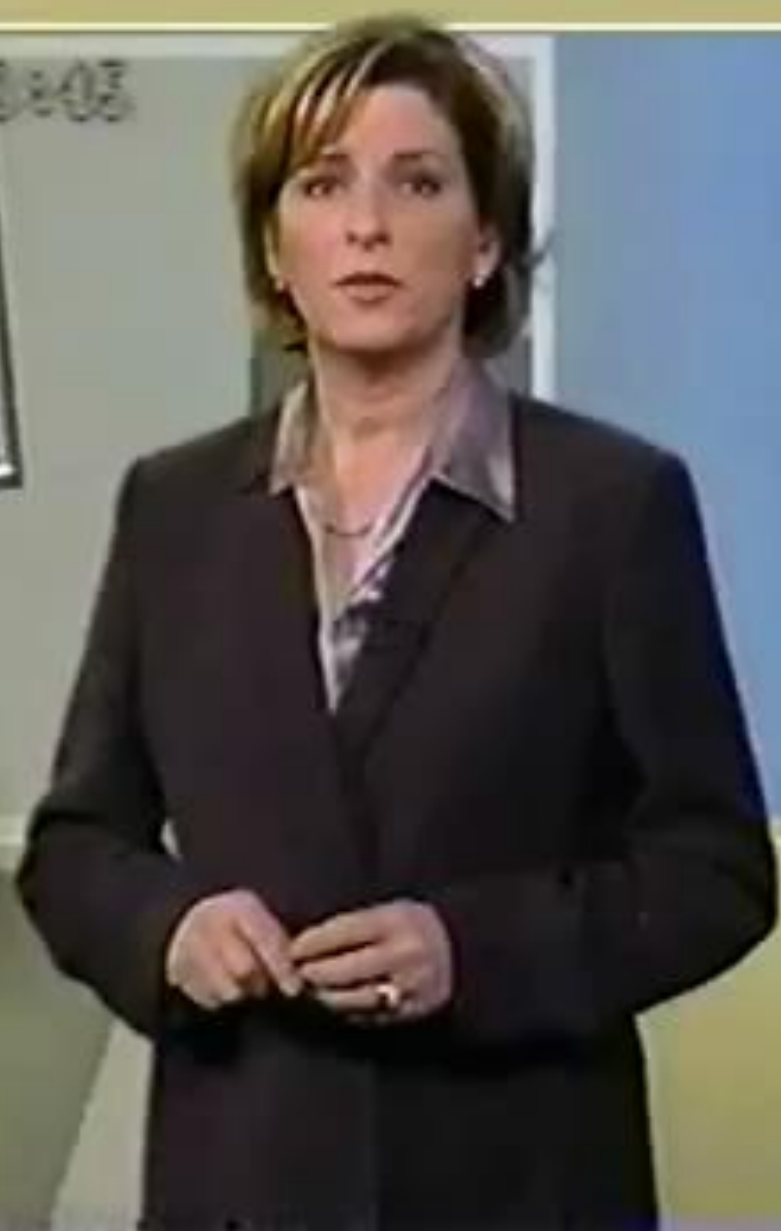


# Best Practices for LE From Trauma to Trial

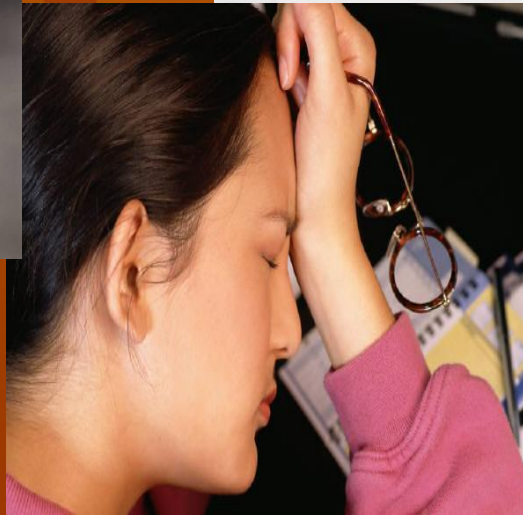
Understanding Dynamics of Victim  
Behavior

&

Importance of Victim Centered Team  
Approach in Adult Sexual Assault



# What is Typical Victim Behavior?



# There is **NO TYPICAL** Victim Behavior

- Delayed Reporting
- Contact with Suspect **AFTER** Offense
- Inconsistencies
- Previous Claims of Victimization
- Lies About Behavior
- Reports to Someone other than Law Enforcement
- Indifferent to Injuries or Pain

# Victim Behavior

- Flat
- Crying
- Laughing
- ALL are behaviors LE has seen and ACCEPTED before at traumatic accident and death scenes.....

# Victim Centered Response

- Limited Patrol Interview of victim
- Investigator/Detective ALWAYS responds
- Advocate/SART volunteer ALWAYS responds
- Forensic/SANE Nurse consult,
  - Even when you think there is no need, CALL!



# Victim's Interview: Crucial Evidence

The Investigation of a Sexual Assault is unlike any other type of Criminal Investigation due to the uniquely intimate and invasive nature of the crime.

Your victim is your crime scene. Therefore the victim interview is one of the most important pieces of evidence that you will have in your case

Mishandling the interview can irreparably damage your case.

# Why Interview?

- *“The role of the rape advocate is to believe a victim’s story, whereas the role of a police officer is to prove it”*



*Detective Scott Keenan*

*Chicago Police Dept.*

By corroborating as many facts as possible, no matter how insignificant they may seem, you can better help establish the validity of the victim’s story and improve her credibility even when there are other problems with the investigation.



# Initial Detective Contact

- Always with Advocate
- Advocate is there to provide support that LE cannot.
- A Detective can't hold a hand or put an arm around the victim, the advocate can
- Helps to gain the trust with the victim
- Helps the victim to regain some control that has been lost in her life
- Advocate will be there for support throughout the process



# SANE/Forensic Nurse

- Critical Asset to all phases of the investigation
- Expert advise
- Expert Wittness
- Interprets vital evidence that could otherwise be overlooked



# Commonwealth's Attorney

- Include from the very beginning of your case
- Start building case strategy at the front end, not correcting mistakes at the back end!
- Go over all potential problems, positive evidence and next steps
  - Controlled Telephone Calls
  - Computer Search Warrants
  - Phone pings and searches
  - First Disclosure Witnesses
  - Charging and Arrest Plan



# SART Team Approach

- Remember, As Law Enforcement, YOU set the tone of the case from first contact.
- It is not YOUR Case! It belongs to the team and this includes the victim
- Advocates do not threaten your case, they support it!
- As a LE officer, LEAD, set the standard that SART Works!



# SART Team

- Meet as a team with the victim, before each hearing
- Staff the case as a team,
  - Confront and brainstorm the problems
  - Enhance and put emphasis on the positives
  - Be innovative, try new approaches to what are often very difficult cases.
  - Utilize each area of expertise and use them to compliment one another

# SART APPROACH

- Realize that prosecution is NOT always the ultimate goal
- Recognize the needs of the victim
  - Her Strengths,
  - Her Weaknesses,
  - Listen to her input and wishes
  - And what is BEST for her
  - What does success look like in this case?

# SART and Your Community

- Educate your community
- Dispel the “Myths” of Sexual Assault
- Therefore; you educate your Jury Pool
- Lead by Example
  - Loose the tough cop attitude
  - No more, “Is this a real rape or another waste of my time”
  - BELIEVE first.....
  - Set the tone and culture of your agency and community

