

P.O.S.T COURSE OUTLINE
TRAUMA-INFORMED RESPONSES TO SEXUAL ASSAULT

**P.O.S.T.
TRAUMA-INFORMED RESPONSES TO SEXUAL ASSAULT
EXPLANDED COURSE OUTLINE**

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>TIME</u>
I. <u>Introductions and Overview of Training Goals</u>	30 MIN
A. Overview of training goals	
II. <u>Neurobiology of Trauma and Effective Victim Interviews</u>	90 MIN
A. The brain during sexual assault	
1. Definition of trauma	
2. Traumatic memories	
3. Prefrontal cortex	
a. Primary functions	
b. Impaired during trauma	
c. Impact on memory	
4. Amygdala	
a. Primary functions	
b. Defense cascade	
c. Impact on memory	
5. Automatic survival responses	
a. Dissociation	
b. Tonic immobility	
c. Collapsed immobility	
d. Habits and training	
e. Attachment vs. defense circuitry	
f. Return to prefrontal cortex	
6. Hippocampus	
a. Traumatic event triggers overdrive	
b. Shift to fragmented mode	
7. Focus of attention	
a. Central details	
b. Peripheral details	
c. Sensory memories	
8. Alcohol interferes with encoding	
B. Effects on sexual assault victims	
1. Responses “don’t make sense”	
a. Responses are unique	
b. Victim vs. perpetrator responses	
2. Assume report is false	
C. Current interview techniques	
1. Research on police interviews	
a. Cause victim distress	
b. Reduce ability to recall information	
c. Create inconsistencies, omissions, false information	

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- d. Discourage victim participation
- 2. Ineffective at lie detection
- 3. Contribute to high rates of attrition
- D. We can do better!
 - 1. Interview based on understanding of trauma
 - 2. Setting the stage
 - a. Offer emotional resources
 - b. Provide information
 - c. Identify most pressing need
 - d. Do not ask about prosecution
 - e. Things not to say
 - f. Things not to do
 - 3. Successful interview techniques
 - a. Ask open ended questions
 - b. Listen, listen, listen
 - c. Victims report everything they are able to remember
 - d. Recognize information they cannot provide
 - e. Document the information they can provide
 - f. Provide a safe environment
 - g. Acknowledge the victim's trauma / pain
 - h. Do not expect chronology
 - i. Ask about sensory memories
 - j. Document experiences consistent with trauma response
 - k. Avoid "why" questions
 - l. Alternative ways to ask
 - m. Most difficult aspects of the experience
 - n. Develop capacity to hear about trauma
 - 3. Successful interview techniques
 - a. Ask open ended questions
 - b. Listen, listen, listen
 - c. Victims report everything they are able to remember
 - d. Recognize information they cannot provide
 - 4. Concluding the interview

III. Opening Doors: Increasing Access for Sexual Assault Victims to the Criminal Justice System and Community Services

90 MIN

- A. Sexual assault disclosures and response
 - 1. Informal support providers
 - 2. Positive responses
 - 3. Formal support providers
 - 4. Risk of disclosure
 - 5. Negative responses
- B. Accessing services and reporting
 - 1. Service utilization
 - 2. Reporting to law enforcement
 - a. Barriers to reporting
 - b. Victims seek support first

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- c. The real first responders
- C. Criminal justice responses to sexual assault
 - 1. Historic failures
 - 2. Approaches to reform
 - a. Victim-centered approaches
 - b. Trauma-informed responses
- D. VAWA forensic compliance
 - 1. Key provisions: participation and payment
 - 2. Purpose
 - a. Criminal justice philosophy
 - b. Health care philosophy
 - 3. Definition of forensic exam
 - 4. No requirement for anonymity
 - 5. Deadline and new provisions
 - 6. Billing and payment
 - a. Billing private insurance
 - b. Resources
- E. Alternative reporting options
 - 1. Anonymous reporting
 - 2. Non-investigative reporting
 - a. You Have Options Program (YHOP)
 - b. Benefits for victims
 - c. Benefits for law enforcement
- F. Seek Then Speak and Victim Link
- G. Not just reporting: What happens next?
 - 1. Interagency coordination
 - 2. Units within law enforcement
- H. Policies and protocols
 - 1. Crime victim compensation
 - 2. Evidence questions
 - 3. Victims who convert
 - 4. Pursuing cases without victim consent
- I. Measuring success
 - 1. Prosecution not the only goal!
 - 2. Need for data collection
- J. Public notification
 - 1. New provision in VAWA 2013
 - 2. Strategies and examples

IV. LUNCH 60 MIN

V. Investigating Difficult Cases – Case examples #1-2 90 MIN

- A. Introduce exercises
 - 1. Break into multidisciplinary groups
 - 2. Read assigned case
 - 3. Examine relevant penal code sections
 - 4. Answer questions individually

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5. Discuss questions as a group
 6. Assign a notetaker and spokesperson
 7. Prepare to present group responses
 - B. Case example #1
 1. Reporting by assigned groups
 - a. Identify challenges
 - b. Brainstorm strategies for investigation and prosecution
 - c. Explore multidisciplinary collaboration
 2. Class discussion
 3. Summary of relevant research and best practices
 - C. Case example #2
 1. Reporting by assigned groups
 - a. Identify challenges
 - b. Brainstorm strategies for investigation and prosecution
 - c. Explore multidisciplinary collaboration
 2. Class discussion
 3. Summary of relevant research and best practices
- VI. Investigating Difficult Cases Workshop – Case examples #3, 4, 6 90 MIN
- A. Case example #3
 1. Reporting by assigned groups
 - a. Identify challenges
 - b. Brainstorm strategies for investigation and prosecution
 - c. Explore multidisciplinary collaboration
 2. Class discussion
 3. Summary of relevant research and best practices
 - B. Case example #4
 1. Reporting by assigned groups
 - a. Identify challenges
 - b. Brainstorm strategies for investigation and prosecution
 - c. Explore multidisciplinary collaboration
 2. Class discussion
 3. Summary of relevant research and best practices
 - C. Case example #6 (#5 is not assigned)
 1. Reporting by assigned groups
 - a. Identify challenges
 - b. Brainstorm strategies for investigation and prosecution
 - c. Explore multidisciplinary collaboration
 2. Class discussion
 3. Summary of relevant research and best practices
- VII. Investigating Difficult Cases Workshop – Case example #7 60 MIN
- A. Case example #7
 1. Read case materials
 2. Class discussion
 - a. Identify challenges
 - b. Brainstorm strategies for investigation and prosecution

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- c. Explore multidisciplinary collaboration
- 3. Summary of relevant research and best practices
- B. Resources for sexual assault investigation and prosecution

VIII. Completion of student evaluations

30 MIN