

*Criminal Investigations:  
A Team Approach*



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# *Why A Team Approach?*



- Assist the victim
- Better investigations
- Successful prosecution
- Better use of resources

## *Assist The Victim*



- Reduce the trauma of the investigation on the victim
- A true show of support to the victim
- Provide all the resources available to the victim in an accessible manner

# *Better Investigations*

- Specialists collaborating
  - Interviewers specializing in children, teens, or possibly emotionally or mentally impaired victims
- Avoid duplicating services
  - fewer interviews with victim
  - Shared responsibility

# *Successful Prosecution*

- A team with all the members “on the same page” will accomplish more and provide better information
- Victim’s will be better prepared for prosecuting the perpetrator if supported throughout the investigation
- Thorough investigations and evidence collection

# *Who Makes Up The Team?*

- The team will be multi-disciplined and representing all the agencies that will be involved in the investigation
- Example Team
  - Police
  - Prosecutor
  - Family Independence Agency
  - Advocacy Groups
  - Therapists

# *Team Members*



- Psychologists
- Medical representatives
- Recipient Rights Officers
- School representatives
- Legal representatives

## *How Do We Begin?*

- Determine how your Prosecutor's Office and local Law Enforcement would like these cases handled. You should always meet with the Prosecutor and Law Enforcement prior to implementing any new investigative technique.

# *How Do We Begin?*

- Better training for those involved in the investigation
- Provide care providers with a better understanding of what they can do to assist in the investigation

# *Care Providers*

- Care Providers need a basic understanding of what the investigative team needs to succeed with the investigation
- The investigation will often begin with the care providers
- The actions of the care providers can greatly impact the investigation either positively or negatively

# *How Does the Care Provider Impact the Investigation*

- Reactions to disclosure of abuse
  - Belief, skepticism, or disbelief
  - Supportive or not supportive of the victim
  - What the care provider does after becoming aware of the abuse
    - Contact Police, protect the scene, and protect evidence

# *What Can The Care Provider Do to Assist The Investigative Team*

- Notify Police or make the appropriate referral ASAP
  - Shows victim that Police and Care Provider care and are willing to help
  - Allows Police an opportunity to conduct a proper investigation of the scene
- No contact between victim and suspect

# *What Can The Care Provider Do to Assist The Investigative Team*

- Be supportive of the victim and not judgmental
  - Perpetuates the disclosure process
  - Often victim's may have feelings of guilt do to some actions of theirs such as under age drinking

# *What Can The Care Provider Do to Assist The Investigative Team*

- Do not ask leading questions of the victim
  - Allow victim a chance to explain what occurred in a free narrative format
  - Do not suggest to victim what you believe may have happened
  - Avoid “tainting” the victim’s disclosure

# *What Can The Care Provider Do to Assist The Investigative Team*

- Protect the crime scene
  - Secure the area in which the crime is believed to have occurred
  - Bedding, clothing worn by victim after assault, fingerprints, body fluids, etc. all can be destroyed or severely degraded if left unsecured

# *What Will Law Enforcement Do?*

- Police will form an investigative plan and make arrangements for the collection of evidence
- Determine the need for the victim to have a specialized exam for evidence
  - Sexual assault nurse examiner
  - Emergency room

# *What Will Law Enforcement Do?*

- Police may schedule an interview with the victim at a different location so that team members can be present
- The interview will be a “forensic interview” and may be conducted by a team member selected for this particular victim

# *What Will Law Enforcement Do?*

- Police may utilize certain investigative tools such as:
  - Pre-text call back
    - Call made by victim to suspect
    - Monitored and recorded by police
    - Victim gets suspect to make an admission or confession in the form of an apology or promise not to do “it” again

# *What Will Law Enforcement Do?*



- Police may utilize certain investigative tools such as:
  - Search warrants
    - Suspects residence
    - Suspects vehicle
    - Suspects DNA

# *What Will Law Enforcement Do?*

- Interview and interrogate the suspect
- Polygraph the suspect
- Police may arrest if probable cause exists
- Police may submit the report to the Prosecutor's Office for review and the issuance of an arrest warrant

# *What Will Other Team Members Do?*



- Provide services to the victim
  - Counseling
  - Medical treatment
  - Shelter
  - Legal advise
- Other services depending on the needs of the victim

# *Team Members*



- Team members should remain in contact with each other and the victim to insure that services are provided as needed and that the investigation precedes properly

# *Victimology*

- The study of victims and victimization
  - Victims who are young, emotionally or mentally impaired are selected for specific reasons
    - Less likely to fight or resist
    - Less likely to report or disclose
    - less likely to be believed
    - less likely to successfully prosecute
    - Easily coerced

# *Prevention*

- What can we do to prevent these assaults from happening
  - Understand that these things do happen
  - Educate care providers in what to look for
  - Identify potential victims and take precautions
  - Establish protocols for contact between subjects who are potential victims and suspects

## *The Future*



- Hopefully by working together we can reduce the incidence of abuse and successfully prosecute the cases that do occur