



Sexual Assault Audit Results and Recommendations

Commander Matt Rippy
Kim Messina, Victim Services
Coordinator

Introduction

- Internal Audit of Sexual Assault Cases
- Recommendations from Audit
 - You Have Options Program

Overview

- May of 2015, Initiated Sexual Assault Review
- Recognized improvement in SA investigation was needed
- Recognized victims were being underserved
- Researched Industry Standards

Systematic Evaluation

- **Goal:** Determine the level of service provided to victims of sexual assault.
- Reviewed all felony and misdemeanor SA cases from 2012 to 2014 were identified.
 - 95 Felony and misdemeanor cases from 2012 to 2014 were selected.
- Form a partnership with End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI). They assisted with design of the Audit.

Systematic Evaluation Cont.

- Form Audit Teams with our law enforcement partners to review the selected cases
- Form a partnership with Mary Dodge, Ph.D. and Katherine Jimmerson, CU Denver, to process the data.

Partnership with CU Denver

- Scholarly research of police sexual assault investigation
- Industry best practices researched
- Data analysis of case audits
- Recommendations

Audit Team

- 3 audit teams were developed
 - Law Enforcement Professionals
 - 8 outside agencies
 - 2 internal Investigation's Sergeants
 - Victim Services Professional
 - 6 outside agencies
 - 2 internal CSI's

Audit Team

- Thorough Review of entire case
 - Investigative Process
 - Assess actions of patrol
 - Assess follow up by detectives
 - Assess evidence collection and management
 - Assess victim services, victim and suspect demographics

Review Team findings

- Lack of documentation
- Lack of basic victim services
- There was an extended period of time between case assignment and interview with the victim
- 46 cases were recommended for further investigation

Review Team

- Based on the findings of the Audit Team, two part-time sexual assault detectives were hired to examine the 46 cases identified by the Audit Team.
- A Victim Advocate was assigned to the Review Team.
- The Review Team was directed to re-open the 41 cases (plus 5 companion cases) and investigate them to their fullest.

Recommendations

1. More thorough documentation from initial report to case disposition.
2. Strong emphasis on evidence collection analysis.
3. Trauma informed forensic interviewing.
4. Low rates of minority reporting indicate a need for additional analysis.

Recommendations Continued

5. Culturally grounded investigations.
6. Extended training on trauma informed response.
7. Evaluate procedures utilized in problematic case that might involve intoxication, language barriers and difficult victims.

Moving forward

- Better Oversight
- Organizational Change in the approach to sexual assault investigations
- Implement “You Have Options Program”



QUESTIONS?

WHAT IS YHOP?

- **YOU HAVE OPTIONS** is a program developed to improve the criminal justice response to sexual assault. This response is led by law enforcement professionals working in partnership with advocacy and experts in the field of sexual assault response and prevention.



**YOU HAVE
OPTIONS
PROGRAM™**

SEXUAL ASSAULT REPORTING

WHY YHOP?



IMPACT OF A TRADITIONAL RESPONSE

- Barriers to reporting keep the majority of sexual assault victims from seeking assistance through the criminal justice system.
- Law enforcement rarely receives the information necessary to hold sexual offenders accountable.
- Offenders go on to victimize additional persons.

IMPACT OF A TRADITIONAL RESPONSE

May increase instances of:

- Victims omitting information.
- Victims not continuing with the investigation.
- Victims providing false information.
- Victim saying the assault did not happen to disengage from the process.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

1. Increase sexual assault reporting by addressing barriers to reporting.
2. Increase identification and investigation of sexual offenders.
3. Decrease sexual assault victimization.

HOW YHOP MEASURES SUCCESS

- Increased Reporting
- Increased Trust
- Increased Identification of Offenders
- Increased Empathy
- Increased Victim Satisfaction

CHANGING THE RESPONSE

- Any change in the way law enforcement responds and investigates sexual violence needed to be beneficial to both **law enforcement** and the **victim** to be successful.

SHIFTING FOCUS

- Best practices in sexual assault investigations challenge law enforcement to shift the focus from the victim to the offender.
- How and why did the offender target the victim?
- How did the offender exploit the victim's vulnerabilities?

THIS IS A VICTIM-CENTERED RESPONSE

- Provides investigators with information they would otherwise never have had access to.
- Investigators receive more accurate information.
- Victims participate more completely within the investigative and judicial process.
- Victims are more willing to identify their assailant.
- Victims are more likely to report a positive experience with law enforcement regardless of the judicial outcome.



Team members received (40) hours of training in Oregon April 18-22, 2016

Those who attended are:

Detective Mike Saunders

Detective Aaron Conroy

Sgt. Rob McCoy

Sgt. Tim McGuire

Commander Matt Rippy

VSU Coordinator Kim Messina