

**Webinar: Trauma Informed Investigations with
Victims of Non-Fatal Strangulation Assaults**

**September 28, 2015
10:00am-11:30am**

Course Description:

Justice begins with an understanding of the devastating impact that trauma has on domestic violence and sexual assault victims who have been strangled. The effects of trauma are often misinterpreted by the police, prosecutors, judges, and juries. By understanding trauma, officers can contribute to the immediate and long term recovery of the victim and lay the foundation for mutual respect and trust on which a successful response and investigation is built.

Presentation materials and recording are available at
www.strangulationtraininginstitute.com

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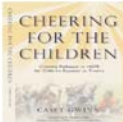
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Today's Presenter:



Chief Tom Tremblay, (Ret.)
Law Enforcement Consulting & Training
Graduate of the 183rd Session of the
FBI National Academy

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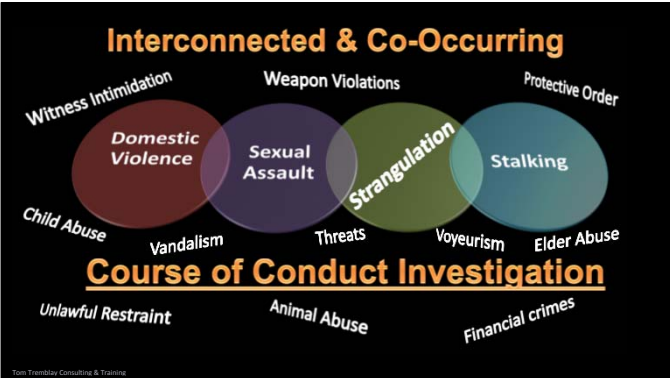
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Trauma Informed Approach:
Victims of Non-Fatal Strangulation
Assaults

Webinar, September 28, 2015



Chief Tom Tremblay (Ret)
www.tomtremblayconsulting.com



Why Start with Trauma?

Recognized promising practice...

- White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault, *Not Alone Report*, April 2014, page 3. National Center for Campus Public Safety: www.nccpsafety.org
- International Association of Chiefs of Police Trauma Informed Sexual Assault Training: www.theiacp.org
- New state laws and legislative efforts: mandated Trauma Informed Training for Law Enforcement

Why Start with Trauma?

- The Victim’s First Impression matters...
- Understanding the impact of Victim Trauma promotes:
 - victim healing – more reporting
 - better interviews & investigations
 - greater offender accountability = Public Safety
- Not understanding leads to bad outcomes and potentially long-term, devastating consequences for Victim and Community...

Why Start with Trauma?

- Impacts of trauma are frequently misinterpreted as not telling the truth...



Detective On-Call

- “ALLEGED...”
- “ALLEGED...”
- “ALLEGED...”
- “It all sounds suspicious...”
- “Victim can’t get their story straight...”
- “It sounds like the victim is making it up...”
- “Victim didn’t scream, fight, or run away...”
- “No obvious signs of injury...”
- “Victim isn’t acting the way I would expect...”

Understanding Trauma

Trauma physically changes our brain...

- Trauma triggers chemicals...
- Chemicals influence perception, reaction, and memory...
- Memory becomes fragmented (out of sequence)
- Memory is stored in the brain differently
- We **do not control** how the **brain** and **body** responds to trauma...

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Understanding Trauma

- Anne Munch, Esq.
- Dr. Rebecca Campbell
- Dr. David Lisak
- Russell Strand, Chief, U.S. Army M.P. School

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Understanding Trauma

- Delayed reporting, inability to recall details and sequence of events is common as a result of **victim trauma (fragmented memory)** – **Impacts of trauma can be life long.**

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Defining Trauma

A **traumatic event** either witnessed or experienced, representing a fundamental threat to one’s physical integrity or survival

- Responses involve intense fear, helplessness or horror
- The meaning of the event may be as important as the actual physical act/experience

(Lisa Ferentz, 2008)
Credit Dave Thomas M.S., Johns Hopkins University

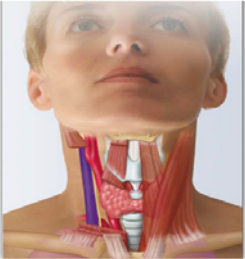
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Strangulation
A Quick Reference Guide

Strangulation is a form of asphyxia (lack of oxygen) characterized by closure of the blood vessels and/or air passages of the neck.

- Absence of visible injury is common
- Encourage medical treatment

Source: CA Law Enforcement Brochure-Agnew & Heisler



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Strangulation Training

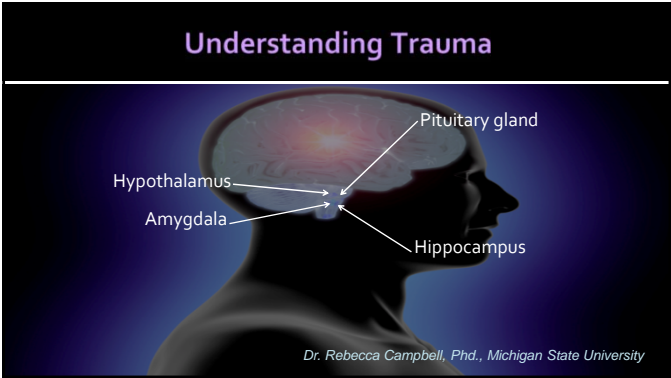
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Understanding Trauma

Main Stress Chemicals Released:

- Catecholamines (Natural Adrenaline)
- Corticosteroids (Energy)
- Opioids (Natural morphine)
- Oxytocin (Good Feelings)

Dr. Rebecca Campbell, Michigan State University

The Body Responds...
Fight – Flight

Preparing to “fight” or “flight”

- Hormones surge — increased heart rate & blood pressure, hyper ventilation, glucose to major muscles
- Digestive and immune systems shutdown to conserve energy for fight or flight
- Rational thought impaired
- Superfocus on sensory details, other details ignored
- Opioids released – numbing, spacey effect

Dr. Rebecca Campbell, Phd., Michigan State University



The Body Responds...

- “Frozen fright” (tonic immobility)
- Dissociation

Dr. Rebecca Campbell, Phd., Michigan State University

Officer Trauma



Victim Trauma

Strangulation Stalking
Sexual Assault Domestic Violence

Officer Trauma & Victim Trauma

Officer:

- “I don’t remember pulling my weapon”
- “I don’t remember squeezing off the first 5-6 shots”
- “I had a vision of my wife at my funeral”

Victim / Survivor:

- “Not exactly sure what happened”
- “I don’t really know how long it lasted”
- “I kinda just blanked out / I just went somewhere else”

How Victim Trauma Impacts Investigation

Victims may experience certain responses during and after the assault:

- Traumatic Memory is fragmented, can’t provide narrative – misinterpreted as not being truthful
- Demeanor: lack of emotion or odd or inappropriate affect – misinterpreted
- There is no “normal victim response”

How Victim Trauma Impacts Investigation

Victims may experience certain responses during and after the assault:

- A range of emotions-fear, self blame, shame, etc...
- Impact from “disastrous disclosures” and victim blaming: Why did you...? Why didn’t you...?

How Victim Trauma Impacts Investigation

The Victim is “sitting on the edge of their seat:”

“Am I going to be believed?”

“Am I going to be supported?”

Victim’s First Impression Matters!

“The tone of the first meeting with the victim may set the tone for the rest of the investigation.

By being empathetic, patient, and respectful, (you) can contribute to the immediate and long term recovery of the victim and lay the foundation for mutual cooperation and respect on which a successful interview, investigation and prosecution is built.”

IACP Sexual Assault Issues and Concept Paper

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Body Language / Tone

Police Command and Control...



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Reassure the Victim

Reassure and empower the victim with a consistent and supportive message:

Empower Victim - decisions to regain control

- “I’m sorry this happened... I commend you for reporting...”
- “Would you like to call someone for support?”
- “Where would you like to sit?” “Is it Ok if I sit here?”
- “Can I get you something....”

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Reassure the Victim

Reassure and empower the victim with a consistent and supportive message:

“Can I tell you something?”

- “Your health and safety is our priority”
- “We have a specially trained team...”
- “We will do our best to keep you informed
- Advocacy support

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Avoid “Victim Blaming”

Questions to avoid:

Why did you...?

Why didn’t you...?

We do not need to answer these questions in the initial response. We can find another way to ask later in the investigation.

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Trauma Informed Victim Interviews

Preliminary or initial interview – brief interview to assist in continuing the investigation

Follow-up or formal interview – Following one, or preferably two sleep cycles; balancing the pace of the investigation with the victim’s ability to move forward

Trauma Informed Interview

The interview is a way to allow the victim to express what their experience was rather than just what they remember or don't remember. Capturing the **trauma** and the **sensory and peripheral details** of the event is **compelling evidence**.

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Trauma Informed Interview

Disclosure is a process, not an event

- What are you **able** to tell us about your **experience**?
- "Paint a picture" of the **experience**...
 - What did no look like?
 - What did the absence of yes look like?
 - What did fear feel like?
- Interviewing for sensory and peripheral details
- Documenting the impacts of trauma during and after the assault...

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Look for for Interconnected & Co-Occurring Crimes – Serial Nature of Offenders

- Suspect's previous conduct with victim?
 - controlling, threatening, frightening behavior
 - abuse, harassment, stalking
 - physical assault, injury, previous strangulation
- Suspect's conduct with other potential victims?

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Victim to Survivor: Advocacy Services

- A 2006 study found when victims receive advocate-assisted services they receive more helpful information and services and experience less secondary trauma by medical and legal systems (**Better Services**)
- When advocates are present in the legal and medical proceedings victims fare better in both the short- and long-term; less psychological distress, health problems, self-blame, guilt, and depression (**Less Trauma**)
- Rape survivors with advocates were 59% more likely to report to police (**More Reporting**)
(Campbell, 2006)

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Use of Expert Witnesses

Impacts of trauma: delayed reporting, fragmented memory

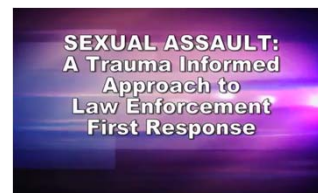
- Most victims do not physically resist;
 - Freeze
 - Tonic immobility
 - Submit - Negotiate
 - Dissociation
- Prosecutors can use expert witnesses to explain trauma, minimization, strangulation, suspect power and control dynamics

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22 Minute Training Video & Facilitator's Guide


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Produced by the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board in Partnership with the Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan Violence Against Women Project featuring Dr. Rebecca Campbell



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IACP Resources
www.theiacp.org



Agency Self Assessment for
Response to Strangulation

Effective Response to Strangulation

Name: _____

Agency: _____

Please answer as completely as possible.

1) In your jurisdiction, what is the average monthly number of reported strangulation cases?

2) How does your jurisdiction handle cases that involve strangulation (delay or investigation)?

3) Do your officers routinely receive training about strangulation (delay or investigation)?

4) Do your officers routinely receive training about strangulation (delay or investigation)?

5) Do your officers routinely receive training about strangulation (delay or investigation)?

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17) Do your officers routinely receive training about strangulation (delay or investigation)?

18) Do your officers routinely receive training about strangulation (delay or investigation)?

19) Do your officers routinely receive training about strangulation (delay or investigation)?

20) Do your officers routinely receive training about strangulation (delay or investigation)?

Thank you!

- The work that you do is important...
- You can contribute to the long term healing of victims...
- The safety of the people shall be the highest law...
- You make the law keep it's promise.
- Be Safe!

Questions?

Tom Tremblay


Tremblay.trt@gmail.com

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Chief Tom Tremblay (Ret)

Throughout his distinguished thirty year policing career Tom Tremblay has been a passionate leader for the prevention of domestic and sexual violence. He is a retired Chief of Police from Burlington, VT, and the former Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Public Safety.

Tom is now a national and international advisor and trainer for police, prosecutors, advocates, higher education, the military, and the private sector. Tom serves as a faculty member for the International Association of Chiefs of Police National Law Enforcement Leadership Institute on Violence Against Women and he is a Senior Associate for Margolis Healy, a national campus public safety firm.

Tom is also an Independent Monitor / Reviewer for Department of Justice Agreements with law enforcement agencies designed to improve sexual assault response and investigations following reports of unlawful gender discrimination in violation of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and the anti-discrimination provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

In 2013 Tom assisted the International Association of Chiefs of Police with the development of a national curriculum for Trauma Informed Response to Sexual Assault. In 2014 Tom assisted the National Center for Campus Public Safety with the White House Task Force recommendation to develop a new curriculum for Trauma Informed Sexual Assault Investigations specific for Colleges and Universities across the country.

Tom holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. He is a graduate of the 183rd Session of the FBI National Academy, the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar, the Police Executive Research Forum – Senior Management Institute for Police, and the National Law Enforcement Leadership Institute on Violence Against Women.



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September 28, 2015
1.5 Training Hours

Co-Founder and CEO
Alliance for HOPE International
Director, Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention