BUILDING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

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SEXUAL ASSAULT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT

THROUGH THE LENS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
OBJECTIVES

• Law enforcement culture
• Understand roles
• Relationship between Law Enforcement and other teams
• How advocates can use this information
MOST HOPE IT IS LIKE THIS

I HOPED IT WAS LIKE THIS
MUCH MORE LIKE THIS!

Do you see a pattern?

UNDERSTANDING POLICE

- Quasi-military
- Uniforms
- Hypervigilance
OFFICER TRAINING

- A little but a lot
- Safety
- Liability
- Elements of the crime
- How statutes are interpreted

TRAINING ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- How many hours? Average
- 6 hours
POLICE STRIVE TO DO GOOD

- Sometimes we make mistakes
- How do we address problems?

LOOKING INSIDE A DEPARTMENT

- Officers start in patrol
- Various positions
- Officers tend to like working particular cases; most don’t like DV or SA calls
INVESTIGATIONS

- Detectives do follow-up
- Paperwork to prosecution
- Sometimes arrest
- Support patrol
- Typically interacts with advocates

WORKING WITH THE MDT

- SOME EXAMPLES
  - Dispatch
  - Medical professionals
  - Prosecution
  - Advocates
Complainant calls 911 or non emergency → Call taker (911) Operator → Medical and Fire
Complainant calls 911 or non emergency → Dispatcher → Patrol Unit → Police Dispatcher → Patrol Unit
### ADVOCATES
- Follow up with the victim
- In person
- Shows empathy
- Helps navigate systems
- Vicarious trauma continual

### DISPATCH
- Communicates in a short direct way
- Over the phone
- Does not follow up
- Done during or after the initial call
- Vicarious trauma initial call
WHO DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS?

- Emergency medical services
- Fire and medical
- Emergency rooms and doctors
- Sexual assault nurse examiners
- (also very AWESOME)

MEDICAL HEARSAY

- Hearsay vs. medical hearsay
- Information can be used in court
MEDICAL/FIRE

• Frequently responds to calls with LE
• Staging
• Provides first aid and life-saving support
• No advocates

SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER (SANE)

• Rape kit
• Importance of SANEs (Campbell et al., 2014; Golding et al., 2015)
• LE relies on exam
PROSECUTION

LAW ENFORCEMENT & PROSECUTORS

- Report: RARELY
- Investigation: SOMETIMES
- Screening: MOSTLY
- File or Decline: MOSTLY
- Court: BY SUBPOENA
- Sentencing: RARELY
CASELOAD (PROSECUTORS)

- Huge caseloads
- Lower focus
- Low customer service
- Little communication

LAW ENFORCEMENT & PROSECUTION

- How does this affect the victim?
- How does this benefit the advocate?
- How is the role different?
- Are we working together or opposite?
ADVOCATES

SIMILARITIES

- LE & Advocates both:
- Help victims/survivors
- Experience high turnover rate
- Experience vicarious trauma
HIGH TURNOVER RATES

• High staff burnout
• Unmet trauma needs
• Lack of admin support
• Always retraining


WORKING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

Three Options

Administration  Officer  Others
ADMINISTRATION

• Usually easier
• Timing & change in administration
• Patience

ADMINISTRATION

• Take time
• Meet away from the office
• Educate- don’t tell
• Pitch a clear plan
• Expect blunt feedback
ADMINISTRATION

• How can you help them?
• What are the benefits of the plan?
• What are the costs?
• How much time & energy can you spend?

TAKING THE OFFICER PATH

• Find an officer who is 2-3 years into job
• Advantage- potentially longer relationship (careers)
• Pay off may not be fast
• Someone who “gets it”
POLICE CAN BE STUBBORN

- Often one sided relationship
- Chat one-on-one
- Band-Aids not solving larger problems

HOW CAN ADVOCATES USE THIS INFORMATION?

- Better communication
- Better relationships
- Better victim response
- Better criminal justice response
QUESTIONS

REFERENCES


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