

# **From Trauma to Transcendence**

## **Sexual Assault Response Team Conference**

March 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

**Russell Auditorium**  
Arizona National Guard  
Papago Park Military Reservation  
5636 E. McDowell Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85008



Sexual Violence is a public health problem. 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men have been raped in their lifetime (Division of Violence Prevention, 2012). Over 1 in 4 Native Americans report experiencing rape (CDC, 2014). 1 in 10 Arizona high schoolers report experiencing rape (AZ Department of Education, 2013). While vastly underreported, The National Human Trafficking Hotline has received reports of over 22,191 sex trafficking cases in the US (Polaris), and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimated that 1 in 6 runaway children were victims of sex trafficking. Sexual Violence is the most under-reported crime. When it is reported, the chances that the perpetrator will actually spend time in jail is very low- in fact 86% of sex offenders never spend time in jail (Campbell, 2012). The overwhelming majority of women in prison are survivors of domestic violence. Three-quarters have histories of severe physical abuse by an intimate partner during adulthood, and 82% suffered serious physical or sexual abuse as children (Correctional Association of New York, 2017). This is a problem.

# Agenda

## Day One – March 1st

8:00-8:30 Welcome & Expectations

Myra Ferechil  
John Raedar

8:30-10:00 **Neurobiology of Trauma**

Dr. Chris Wilson

To articulate an understanding of the neuroscience behind trauma and what that means to victims of trauma seeking to navigate a criminal justice system.

10:00-10:15 Break

10:15-11:30 **Improving Victim Interviews**

Russell W. Strand

**FETI (Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview)** is a trauma informed methodology that is rooted in neuroscience and has proven to be a more effective and compassionate way to facilitate interviews with victims of trauma and suspects.

11:30-12:30 Lunch

12:30-1:45 **Improving Suspect Interviews**

Russell W. Strand

**FETI (Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview)** is a trauma informed methodology that is rooted in neuroscience and has proven to be a more effective and compassionate way to facilitate interviews with victims of trauma and suspects.

1:45-2:00 Break

2:00-3:00 **An Introduction to the “You have Options Program” (YHOP)** Susan Moen

YHOP is a program for law enforcement by law enforcement whose goal is to increase sexual assault reports to law enforcement and to more thoroughly investigate identified offenders for serial perpetration.

3:00-4:00 **Forensic Exams**

Rebecca Fears

Forensic exams are an essential piece of the victim’s experience of the criminal justice system. When taking into consideration the neuroscience, how can SARTs more effectively approach the forensic exam piece of the experience?

4:00-5:00 **Trauma to Trial**

Meghan Tokash

The constitution of the United States determines that a defendant has the right be tried in a fair manner, but does that mean that the process has to lack compassion? Trauma informed court houses are beginning to emerge and the results are stunning.



## **There are two primary goals of this conference:**

### **1.) Inspire, empower and improve Arizona's SARTs (Sexual Assault Response Teams).**

Sexual violence affects many aspects of a victim's life—including safety and health, family and work situations, and finances—and often leads to perplexing legal questions. To ensure justice and create a more compassionate and streamlined response, service providers must intervene in a way that speaks to the context of each victim's circumstance and respects the unique roles of the different professionals involved in responding to sexual assault. Over the years, communities have developed a team approach with just those goals in mind. Multidisciplinary teams, often called SARTs (sexual assault response teams), partner together to provide interagency coordinated responses that make victims' needs a priority, hold offenders accountable, and promote public safety. All too often, first responders work in silos or compete with each other for resources. A community with a high functioning SART will dramatically improve the victim's experience and reduce secondary victimization.

### **2.) Educate SARTs and first responders about what neuroscience has uncovered about trauma and how that shifts the way in which we practice.**

Neuroscience research indicates that a traumatic experience instantly and radically changes the brain's neurochemistry, including the brain region that involves memory formation and a person's ability to recall events in context and sequence. Because of the brain's response, the victim may not be able to recall what happened in a logical or sequential order and may be responding to that trauma with laughter or with little to no emotion.

Asking a rape victim to describe what happened in a “who, what, when, where, how” manner or to “start from the beginning” may inadvertently push the victim to try to recall the sequence of events when they are actually unsure of that sequence.

#### **The research indicates victims of trauma respond better when:**

- ▶ They are allowed to get a couple nights of sleep prior to a deep in-depth interview.
- ▶ They feel safe with the person conducting the interview. “Victims who felt they were being treated with compassion and respect by investigators, first responders, courts and prosecutors talk more openly about their experience; they disclose more and withhold less.” Expressing empathy and compassion toward victims leads to greater levels of helpful information.
- ▶ Their interviewer understood the neuroscience and utilized the forensic experiential trauma interview (FETI) technique which is a trauma informed manner of facilitating a conversation that is sensory based.
- ▶ They are not treated as witnesses to their sexual assault, but as people who experienced something terrible.

**Outputs:**

200 total people will attend the training  
Of the 200, 75 will be members of law enforcement  
Of the 200, 30 will be prosecutors  
Of the 200, 20 will represent a SART

**Outcome:**

4 agencies will update their protocols based off the training in some tangible way as measured by a 6 month follow up survey.

4 county SARTS will evolve their county practices based off of the training in some tangible way as measured by 6 month follow up survey.

As measured by a post training evaluation, 70% of participants will agree to participate in a 6 month follow-up to measure change in behavior.

**Outcome- Other:**

8 months after the training, a report will be generated and sent to all training participants that captures all reported changes and testimonies.

**Efficiency**

**Quality:**

As measured in 6 month follow-up surveys, 50% of training participants will report that the training increased their ability to respond to the emotion and physical needs of sexual assault victims. As measured in 6 month follow up surveys, 95% of survey responders will report that they used the training techniques.

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