



Preliminary Investigation Guidelines for First Responders

Kimberly A. Lonsway, PhD
and Sergeant Joanne Archambault (Ret.)

October 2006, Last updated March 2019

Course Description

This module accompanies the Model Policy on Investigating Sexual Assaults established by the IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center. The purpose of the policy is to provide officers and investigators with guidelines for responding to reports of sexual assault, assisting victims, collaborating with local health and service agencies, and conducting interviews with victims, witnesses, and suspects. Because of the special needs involved in sexual assault investigations, this policy is an all-inclusive document that covers first response, investigation, and prosecution.

Estimated time for completion: 8 hours

OVW Grant Funding

The OLTI was created and continues to be supported with funding from the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. However, the opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Expert Contributions

OLTI training content is created and updated with input from professionals in a variety of disciplines, including law enforcement, prosecution, health care, victim advocacy, and related fields. Please see the acknowledgements page of each module, for a list of the individuals who served as contributing authors or expert reviewers.

Course Evaluations

At the end of each module participants are asked a number of questions, including the overall quality of the module, as well as its difficulty. They are also asked to indicate how likely they are to apply the information they learned on the job. Their responses are summarized in the following charts, and illustrated with the quotes.

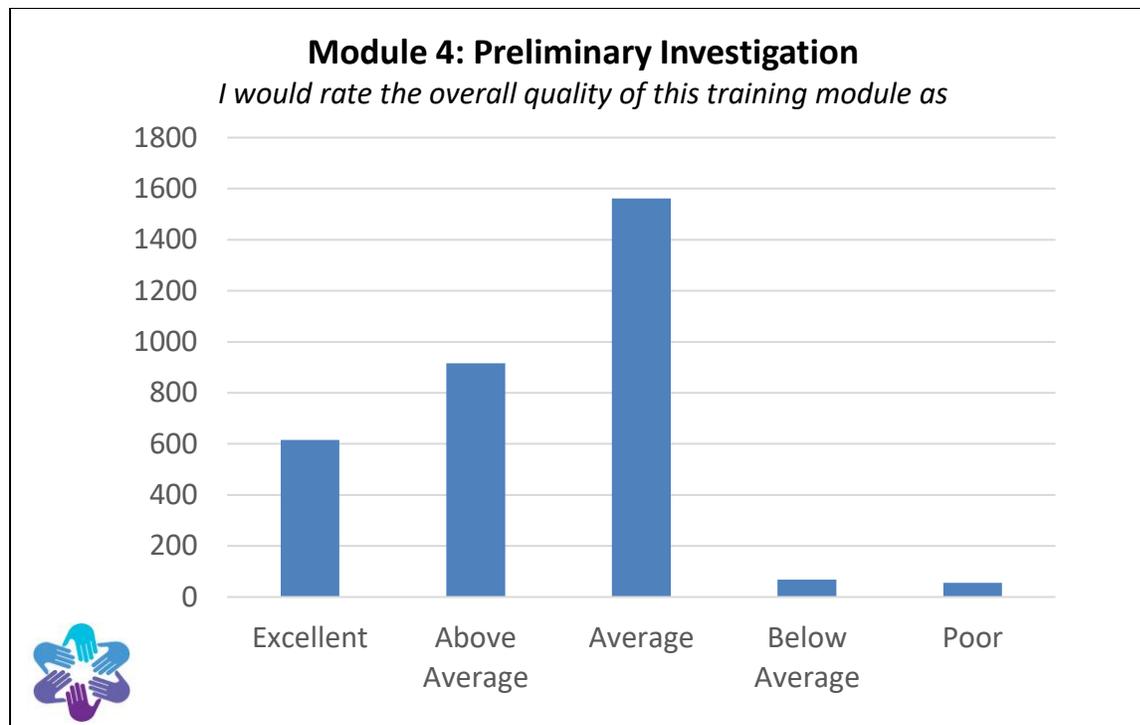
Preliminary Investigation

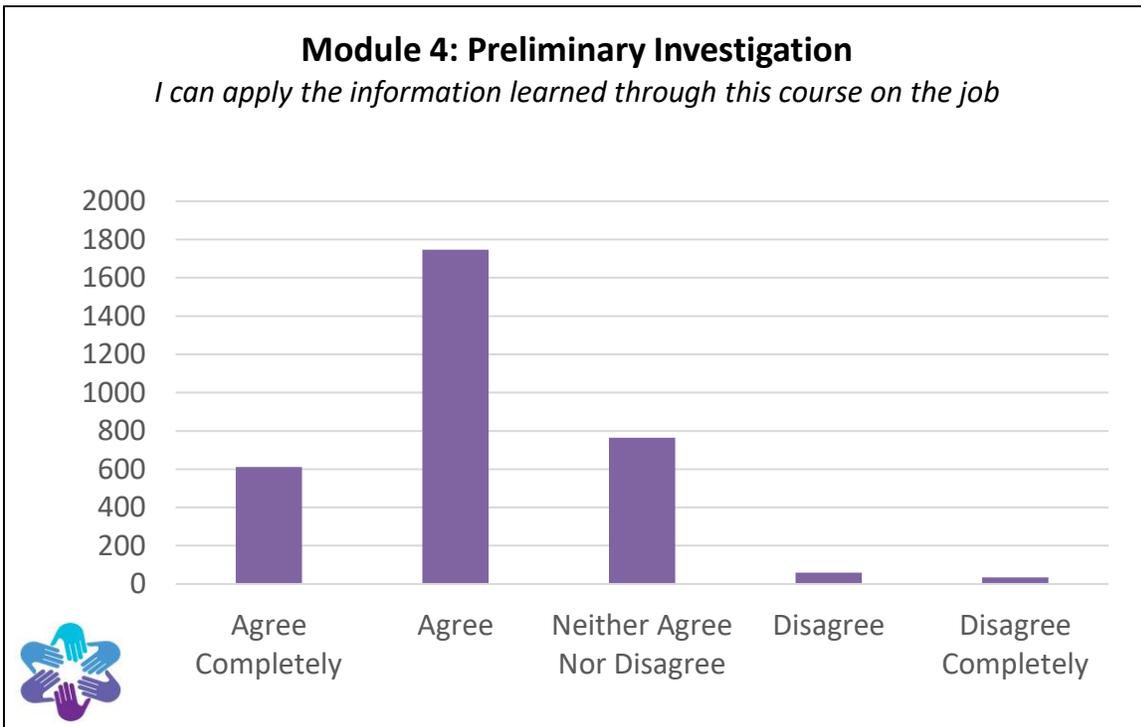
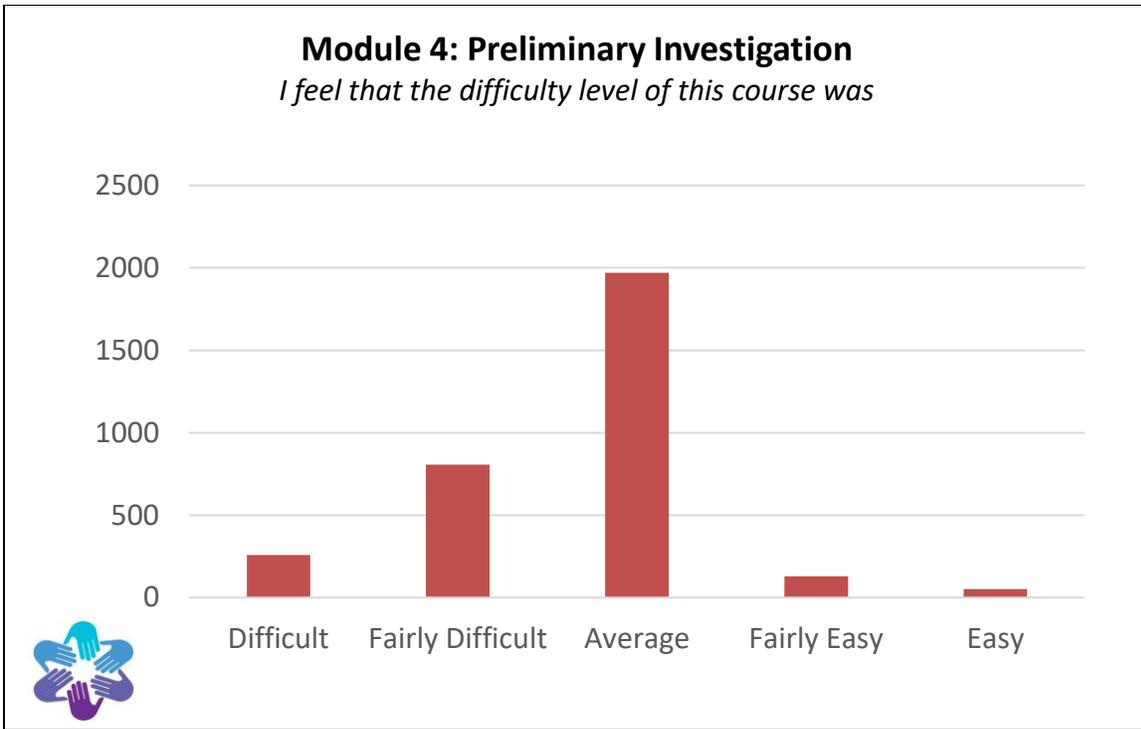
Lonsway, Archambault

What did you find most helpful in this module?

The course material was a good "refresher" course and definitely increased my knowledge base.

It was a valuable overview of the investigative process.





73% “agree completely” or “agree” that they can apply what they learned on the job.

Course Objectives

At the end of this training module, the learner will be able to:

- Recognize the background material and supporting documentation that provides a greater understanding of the developmental philosophy and implementation of the model policy.
- Apply a conceptual analysis of the legal elements of a sexual assault offense in order to:
 - Determine the category of sexual assault case being handled.
 - Predict the defense most likely to be raised.
 - Guide an investigative strategy toward overcoming that particular defense.
- Apply field investigative procedures and best practices for working with victims of criminal sexual violence, including:
 - The dispatcher or call taker response.
 - The initial officer response.
 - The preliminary victim interview.
 - The forensic examination of victims of sexual assault.
 - The follow-up victim interview.
 - Drug-facilitated sexual assault cases.
 - Contacting and interviewing the suspect.
 - The sexual assault forensic examination of the suspect.
 - DNA technology.
 - The determination whether a case is a crime, unfounded or a false complaint.
 - Polygraphs and other interrogation techniques.
- Develop policies for law enforcement agencies that takes into account the requirements and circumstances of individual communities and agencies.

Course Outline

- I. Recognize the background material and supporting documentation that provides a greater understanding of the developmental philosophy and implementation of the model policy
- II. Apply a conceptual analysis of the legal elements of a sexual assault offense in order to:
 - a. Determine the category of sexual assault case being handled,
 - b. Predict the defense most likely to be raised
 - c. Guide an investigative strategy toward overcoming that particular defense
- III. Apply field investigative procedures and best practices for working with victims of criminal sexual violence, including:

Preliminary Investigation

Lonsway, Archambault

- a. The dispatcher or call taker response
 - b. The initial officer response
 - c. The preliminary victim interview
 - d. The forensic examination of victims of sexual assault
 - e. The follow-up victim interview
 - f. Drug-facilitated sexual assault cases
 - g. Contacting and interviewing the suspect
 - h. The sexual assault forensic examination of the suspect
 - i. DNA technology
 - j. The determination whether a case is a crime, unfounded or a false complaint
 - k. Polygraphs and other interrogation techniques
- IV. Develop policies for law enforcement agencies that takes into account the requirements and circumstances of individual communities and agencies