



Kimberly A. Lonsway, PhD
Sergeant Joanne Archambault (Ret.)
And Heather Huhtanen

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Course Description

This module explores strategies to increase reporting options for sexual assault victims. These approaches are grounded in a victim-centered and trauma-informed philosophy, encapsulated in the concepts of one step at a time and opening doors. After defining key concepts, the module examines policy and practice considerations for communities seeking to implement such options. Ultimately, victims who have more ways to access information and support, to receive physical and psychological care, and to preserve the viability of a criminal justice intervention, will have more opportunities to successfully participate in the criminal justice process if and when they choose to do.

Estimated time for completion: 12 hours

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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 Objectives

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

- Describe the “funnel of attrition” for sexual assault cases within the criminal justice system and identify the single most significant point of attrition.
- Identify key barriers to reporting that victims of sexual assault may experience.

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- Explain two key aims of alternative reporting options, and how those aims can help increase victim engagement and address the funnel of attrition.
- Describe the relevance of alternative reporting options to VAWA forensic compliance, both in terms of the *letter of the law* and the *spirit of the law*.
- Define and differentiate between anonymous reporting, non-investigative reporting, and third-party reporting.
- Identify the key conceptual, legal/policy, and practical issues that need to be addressed in a multidisciplinary protocol for alternative reporting options.
- Identify recommendations for best practice relevant for a multidisciplinary protocol for alternative reporting options.
- Apply the two main conceptual aims of alternative reporting options as a means of analyzing components in a specific policy or protocol.
- Develop a multidisciplinary protocol that meets VAWA forensic compliance and increases access to reporting and services for sexual assault victims.

Course Outline

- I. Introduction
 - a. Funnel of Attrition
 - b. Barriers to Reporting
 - c. Consequences for Victims, Perpetrators, and Communities
 - d. One Step at a Time
 - e. Elements of Success
 - f. Opening Doors
 - g. Benefits for Victims
- II. VAWA Forensic Compliance: Redefining Reporting
 - a. Forensic Compliance Provisions
 - b. Compliance is Ongoing
 - c. Philosophy of Forensic Compliance
 - d. Public Notification
 - e. Anonymity Not Required
- III. Alternative Reporting Options
 - a. One Investigative Step at a Time
 - b. You Have Options Program
- IV. Anonymous Reporting
 - a. Limits of Anonymity
- V. Non-Investigative Reporting
 - a. Key Elements

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- b. Sample Protocol: New Hampshire Non-Investigative Report
 - c. Online Reporting to Law Enforcement
- VI. Third-Party Reporting
 - a. Third-Party Reporting Protocols
- VII. Courtesy Reports for Other Jurisdictions
 - a. Common Scenarios
 - b. Recommended Practices
 - c. Informational Report vs. Crime Report
 - d. Implications for Alternative Reporting Options
 - e. Crime Reports: Clearing or Suspending
 - f. Informational Reports: Retention Policies
- VIII. Summary of Basic Reporting Options
- IX. Putting Theory into Practice: Developing a Multidisciplinary Protocol
 - a. No False Promises
- X. Practice Considerations
 - a. Notification of Advocates
 - b. Informing Victims
 - c. Written Materials
 - d. Points to Address
- XI. Crime Victim Compensation
 - a. Reporting Requirements
 - b. Contributory Misconduct and Eligibility
 - c. Compensation and Alternative Reporting Options
- XII. Medical Mandated Reporting
 - a. Mandated Reporting and VAWA
 - b. No Report Without Legal Requirement
 - c. Three Scenarios for Consideration
 - d. Not Recording Victim Identity
 - e. Education for Mandated Reporters
 - f. Sample Protocol: Ohio Exams with Mandated Reporting
- XIII. Protecting Victim Privacy
 - a. Sharing Information
 - b. Body Worn Cameras
 - c. Using a Pseudonym

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- XIV. Follow-Up Contact
 - a. Who, When, and How
 - b. Consent for Notification
- XV. Converting to Full Participation
 - a. How Many Victims Convert?
 - b. How Long Does it Take?
 - c. Is it Really “Converting?”
 - d. Case Conversion Protocols
 - e. Point of Contact
 - f. Information for Victims
- XVI. Evidence Collection, Storage, and Testing
 - a. Evidence Collection
 - b. Where Should Evidence be Stored?
 - c. How Long Will Evidence Be Retained?
 - d. Evidence Tracking
 - e. Evidence Testing
 - f. Can Evidence Be Returned to Victims?
 - g. Evidence Destruction
- XVII. Investigative Considerations
 - a. Employ Best Practices
 - b. Victim Preference Statements
 - c. Not Arresting Victims
 - d. Evidence-Based Prosecution
- XVIII. Documentation and Review
 - a. Records Storage
 - b. Intelligence and Analysis
 - c. Supervisory Review
- XIX. Evaluating Protocol and Practice
 - a. Is It Working?
 - b. Prosecution Not the Only Goal
 - c. Changing the Culture
- XX. Conclusion