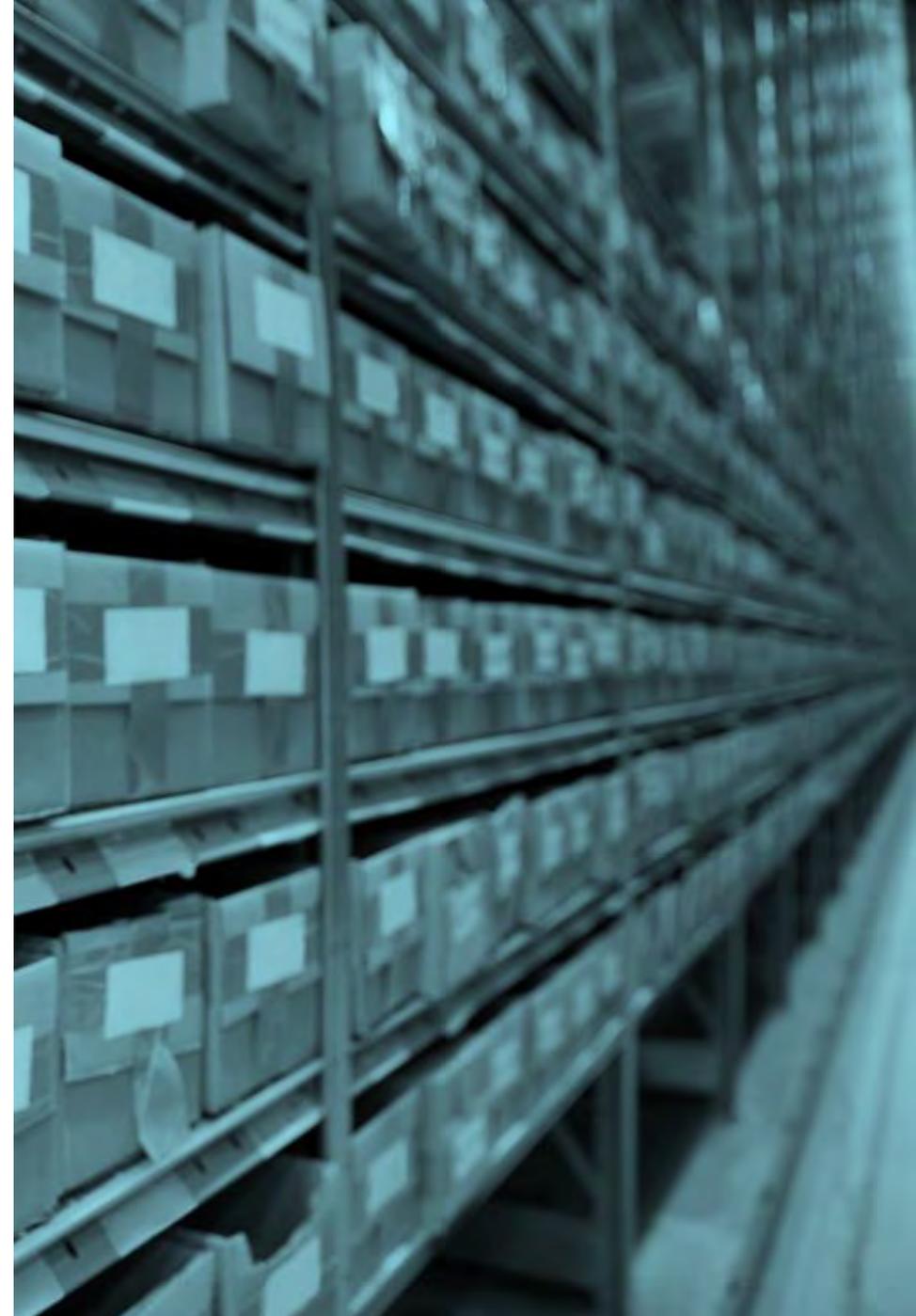




Law Enforcement and Victim Advocates: Supporting Survivors Together

Lt. Jordan Satinsky, Montgomery County Police Department; Marya Simmons, Victim Advocate Consultant; Teresa Stafford, Cleveland Rape Crisis Center

This project was supported by Grant No. 2015-AK-BX-K021 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



Objectives

- Analyze historical barriers between law enforcement and advocates and strengthen skills to overcome them.
 - Explore methods to establish a cohesive partnership.
 - The importance of working as a team.
-

Key Considerations for Increasing Victim Advocacy and Law Enforcement Collaboration

Changing our relationship to achieve better outcomes for
survivors

*“At some point in time or another, most of us have been a member of a ‘great team.’ It might have been in sports, or the performing arts, or perhaps in our work. Regardless of the setting, we probably remember the trust, the relationships, the acceptance, the synergy- and the results that we achieved. We often forget that great times rarely start off great. Usually they start off as groups of individuals. It takes time to develop knowledge to working as a whole...In other words, great teams are learning organizations- groups of people who, **over time**, enhance their capacity to create what they truly desire to create.”*

Ross, Rick. *Backing into a Vision*, The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook.



Understanding Roles: System-Based Advocates

Advocacy vs. Justice

- Victim Rights and Victim-Centered Approaches
- Holding Offenders Accountable vs. Victim Participation
- “Justice Looks Different for Everyone”
 - We all have our idea of what justice looks like

Collaboration with the Community

- Essential Relationships; Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, community agencies
 - Teamwork towards the mission
- 

Understanding Roles: Community-Based Advocates

Victim Centered

- Empowerment/restoration model
- Strong focus on victims rights

Comprehensive advocacy in specialized area

- 24 hour access
- Trauma informed counseling
- Victim directed advocacy vs. disposition of criminal case

Having a seat at the table

- Policy development
 - training
- 

Law Enforcement and Victim Advocates

What Victim Advocates Bring to the Table:

- Training and Certification
- Crisis Intervention
- Safety Planning
- Maintaining Communication (check-in, case updates, etc.)
- **Benefit: To enhance support**



Victim Advocates

- **Safety Planning**
 - Identify and develop a plan
- **Case Management**
 - Mental Health
 - Drug & Alcohol Dependency
 - Housing/Utilities/Childcare
 - Employment
- **Maintaining Communication (check-in, case updates, etc.)**



Understanding Roles: Law Enforcement

- Meet with the victim and obtain information
 - Gather evidence
 - Interview and/or interrogate suspect
 - Review with prosecutor
 - Charge suspect
 - Testify in court
-

Different yet Similar!

- Through the lens of being trauma-informed
- Through the lens of being victim-centered
- Through the lens of being offender-focused



Bridging the Gap



- Address past conflicts or misunderstandings
- Cross-train: Learn each others roles and train together
- Expectation that conflicts could arise if advocates are “allowed” to work with sexual assault victims within the criminal justice system.

Bridging the Gap



- Address what accountability looks like
- Address the concern that advocates serve as “watchdogs”
- Identify why both disciplines might withhold information

Effectively Working with Law Enforcement

- Build a rapport
 - Having a strong partnership with law enforcement greatly benefits victims throughout the criminal justice process.
 - Communication
 - Provide constructive criticism
 - Remember your ethics, boundaries, and victim rights
 - “It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it”
-

Effectively Working with Law Enforcement

- Invite LE to train your advocates and volunteers
 - Acknowledge when officers respond in a trauma informed manner
 - Create opportunities to work together outside of cases
-

Effectively Working Advocates

- Law Enforcement needs to have an open mind
 - Check ego at the door
 - Law Enforcement needs to understand the value of Victim Advocates
 - Victim engagement furthers a case
 - We should not judge each other's roles in this process
-

Effectively Working with Advocates

If you get your advocates to trust you the advocates will get the victims to trust you!



Effectively Working with Advocates

- Understand the difference between community based and system based advocates
 - Benefits of working with both and their limitations
 - Inform advocates of victim meetings in a timely manner
 - Don't talk disparagingly about victims and not expect advocates to give constructive feedback
-

The Beauty of Collaboration

- Professionals have a better understanding of each others roles and limitations
 - Working from strengths of various disciplines
 - Can enhance accountability of various players
 - Fewer victims falling through the cracks in systems
 - We professionals find our support team in the MDT
-

High-Functioning Collaborations

- Egos are set aside
 - Understand one another's mandates and limitations
 - Respect different vantage points and priorities
 - Ability to integrate new members into the team
 - Have institutionalized relationships
-

Steer to the Positive

- Celebrate individual and institutional success
- Celebrate case successes
- Don't get stuck in the negative
 - Opportunity for growth and learning



Team Building

- Build genuine relationships among team members
- Build trust
- Go deeper in collaboration
- Gather together outside of work



Contact Information

Marya L. Simmons

SAKI Consultant - RTI International

216-272-0991

maryasmms77@gmail.com

Lieutenant Jordan Satinsky

Deputy Director, Special Victims Investigations Division

Montgomery County Police Department

240-876-0477

Jordan.Satinsky@montgomerycountymd.gov

Teresa M. Stafford

Senior Director of Victim Services

Cleveland Rape Crisis Center

teresas@clevelandrcc.org

