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## **Facilitating the Male Trauma Experience – Beyond the Barriers**

Victims of trauma- such as sexual assault, child abuse, aggravated assault and/or domestic violence often struggle with their feelings, emotions, and fears. It can be very difficult recalling the details of the experience and many do not truly understand how complex the situation really is. There are often many barriers and the impact is often complicated and difficult to articulate- but even more difficult to navigate.

Although this is true for all casualties of trauma, there are some significant differences in which boys and men process and work through these challenges. Males are gender-socialized in a hyper masculine society and are often taught to avoid many vulnerable emotions and feelings.

When confronted with these challenges boys and men may tend to ignore and repress not only their feelings but the trauma experience as well. Many believe that their status as “male” will be threatened if they outwardly express vulnerability, sadness and/or pain.

Further, this presentation will explore the way in which “being male” intersects with race, class, nation status, sexual orientation and ability...

It is essential for responding professionals such as crime victim advocates, medical personnel, law enforcement first responders, detectives and investigators, attorney’s and others to not only understand the unique challenges males face following traumatic experiences, but also apply this knowledge to the intervention, investigation, and prosecution processes.

This presentation will, through the use of case studies, videos, and research, review the impact of male gender socialization; discuss challenges of working with traumatized males; provided guidance for facilitation of the male trauma experience; and offer promising best practices to assist male victims to share their experiences to improve the intervention, investigation, and prosecution of trauma related crimes.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Describe male gender socialization and hyper masculinity
- Explore how other identities intersect with “being male”
- Describe how many boys and men respond to trauma and high crisis situations
- Articulate some barriers and obstacles to disclosure many males face in their recollection of their experiences
- Understand practical ways in which responding, investigation, and prosecution professionals to better facilitate a better understanding of the male trauma experience
- Identify methods to recognize and overcome many stereotypes and cognitive beliefs about male victims