

Take Out the Drama and Bring in the Trauma

What impact does trauma have on the initiation, investigation, prosecution and decisions made by the trier of fact in violent crime? What is its place in determining whether a report of a crime is taken seriously, documented, investigated or prosecuted? The answer may surprise you.

Often, conclusions about whether a report is credible, reasonable, and provable are drawn through the lens of own life experiences, belief, and framework. When a victim files a report of a traumatic crime, there is a process by which we filter information, often resulting in critically inaccurate judgments of the report and victim. Information reported by the victim just doesn't seem to make sense and is often misinterpreted as reasonable doubt.

However, if properly understood and translated, such evidence can be valuable. The presenters will provide information about common "red flags" and discuss strategies to enable a better analysis of these complex cases.

The criminal justice system will often identify facts such as an "inconsistent statement," delayed report, or problematic victim behavior as a challenge to their case. This talk will teach the audience how to translate trauma and perpetrator manipulation to better understand why victims react in these ways. It will also educate them to utilize this powerful behavior as evidence of a crime rather than an obstacle.

By shifting the focus from judging the victims' behavior and translating it into a survival tactic, the criminal justice system can use the evidence for a conviction of the crime rather than as a challenge that hurts the case.

Learning Objectives:

- Articulate statistics on crimes against women
 - Identify three common victim behaviors that challenge cases.
 - Identify three methods of perpetrators that cause these reactions.
 - Explain the trauma response in basic terms
 - Explain why society tends to default to judgment over understanding of victim behavior
 - The Neurobiology behind bias
 - The Neurobiology of trauma
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