



### **Trauma Responsive Investigations and Prosecutions (TRIP)**

Over the last two decades, there has been an increasing recognition of the role that trauma plays in a wide range of health, mental health and other social problems. Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Assault, Human Trafficking, Child Abuse, Automobile Accidents, Natural Disasters...are all deeply traumatic experiences that can cause severe damage to survivors' physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological well-being. Traumatic experiences, particularly multiple experiences over the course of a lifetime, can result in a range of behavioral health problems beyond and including post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, depression, anxiety problems, childhood behavioral disorders, psychosis and some personality disorder diagnoses are all common traumatic responses. In other words, people who have experienced trauma(s) may respond to the experience(s) in a variety of ways and can be challenging to work with. There may be no visible signs, or there may be dramatic responses ranging for irritability, sudden mood swings, anxiety, anger, denial, fear, inability to articulate or to remember- they may be illogical and/or may not be able to practice good hygiene. They may not be able to remember what you told them or to follow even the most basic of instructions.

Unfortunately, many first responders, advocates, members of law enforcement, prosecutors, counselors and other allied professionals, do not truly understand trauma and are not providing true trauma informed response and care. Too many victims of traumatic experiences are being harmed or re-traumatized by insensitive, uninformed, burnt-out, old school or inadequate community and criminal justice response. And, far too often, first responders and other allied professionals are unaware of the deep impact trauma can have on their own lives- which leads to more secondary victimization. Further, many victims are unable to access justice often times due to the impact of trauma in their lives and resulting behaviors that are often misunderstood.

A trauma responsive investigation and prosecution (TRIP) differs from the traditional in that it incorporates an understanding and application of how high stress and trauma impacts the human body. Neuroscience has illuminated that what we, as a criminal justice system, do not have a clear understanding of memory or trauma. This presentation will provide up-to-date research, case studies and emphasize preserving, corroborating and presenting evidence within the context of the whole experience. We expect victims and suspects to respond to complicated experiences in very one-dimensional ways never considering the four or five-dimensional nature of experience.

There are tangible changes we can make to improve how we capture experience and context by refining the way we corroborate impact, evidence of trauma and fear, understand and document changes in behavior, understanding decision making within context, improving our use of fact witnesses and properly preserving and presenting evidence.

#### **Objectives:**

- Define a holistic, multifaceted definition of Trauma Informed Response and Care -Explore the various trauma informed response and care models
- Deliver a brief overview of the Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview
- Explain the physiological and neurological effect of trauma on the brain
- Explore the differences between a traditional investigation and the traditional prosecution
- Explain "safety" from a neurological perspective
- How to corroborate impact of stress and trauma
- How to preserve and use evidence of the impact of stress and trauma
- Discuss the impact of culture on judgments of the impact of trauma
- Identify what a trauma responsive court can look like?