



CASE SYSTEMS TRAINING REVIEW

CONDUCTED BY THE WASHINGTON STATE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING COMMISSION

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ACRONYMS

APD- Arlington Police Department

CRM- Community Resiliency Model®

CSTR- Case Systems Training Review

EVAWI- End Violence Against Women International

LE- Law Enforcement

PM- Program Manager

PORSA- Patrol Officer Response to Sexual Assaults

SAI- Sexual Assault Investigations

SAK- Sexual Assault Kit

SANE- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

VCERT- Victim-Centered Engagement and Resiliency Tactics

WSCJTC- Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission



TEAMS INVOLVED

The WSCJTC would like to acknowledge and express gratitude to the various contributors of the 2023 Case Systems Training Review Project:



Arlington Police Department

Detective Sergeant- Rory Bolter

Police Services Supervisor- Jennifer Bilow

Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office



CASE SYSTEM TRAINING TEAM

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Megan Allen, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center, VCERT Instructor

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Patti Toth, former prosecutor and former WSCJTC Program Manager

Curtis Whitman, Washington State University Police Department, WSCJTC Instructor

CASE SYSTEMS TRAINING REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“JUSTICE BEGINS WITH A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH”

“Victims and survivors of sexual assault measure “justice” in many ways. There are evolving community expectations and demands for trauma-informed approaches to victims and survivors. This has led to new professional standards for trauma-informed care in our response, investigation, and prosecution of sexual assault cases, and more importantly, for victims and survivors; “Justice begins with a trauma-informed approach.”

-Tom Trembley (Ret) Chief, Burlington Police Department, EVAWI consultant.

Trauma informed systems and responses are critical for supporting victim recall, engagement, wellness and resiliency. When law enforcement integrates victim-centered and trauma informed frameworks into their response and investigation practices, survivors are more likely to remain engaged in the criminal justice process, have an improved outlook and trust of the response system and its officials, as well as have their wellness and recovery prioritized. When trauma-informed practices are implemented, victims are better supported, perpetrators are held accountable, and community safety is furthered.

Recognizing the complexity of these cases and the importance of law enforcement being well equipped to effectively respond to sexual violence, in 2017 the legislature mandated the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) under RCW 43.101.272 to develop and provide comprehensive statewide training. The Sexual Assault Investigations and Victim-Centered Engagement and Resiliency Tactics (SAI-VCERT) course was the result. In 2022, legislation modified the course, adding attendance requirements for leadership and expanding gender-based violence response. Current state law mandates officers assigned to regularly investigate sexual assault and other gender-based violence involving adult victims, as well as the highest-ranking supervisors and commanders overseeing these investigations to complete the SAI-VCERT course within one year of assignment.

Evaluating the training's relevancy and implementation of core training SAI-VCERT principles by law enforcement as evidenced through case work is a key evaluative tool for the WSCJTC. It supports our ability to continue providing highly specialized, quality, and relevant training. Course content and delivery has evolved with former case system training review insights, legislative directives, changes to the law, best practice research, and participant feedback.

2023 marks the fourth Case Systems Training Review (CSTR) conducted by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC) SAI program, an annual mandate under RCW 43.101.278. The purpose of conducting case reviews is to measure the effectiveness of the SAI-VCERT course, and to identify other training needs including advanced training for sexual assault investigators.

Members of the CSTR conduct case reviews to help identify patterns or practices within departments and to assess alignment with SAI-VCERT core principles. The Arlington Police Department (APD) was the participating agency of the Commission's 2023 CSTR process. Outcomes of that review are detailed within this report.

As of November 2023, seven APD officers have attended SAI-VCERT. At training, APD LE demonstrated competency of content and willingness to apply new techniques. APD was selected for review due to their high level of engagement at VCERT trainings, geographic location, and department size.

The 2023 CSTR was unable to determine the influence of the SAI-VCERT course on sexual assault interviews and investigations by Arlington Police Department because the case files submitted did not include any officers who had gone through the training prior to conducting the investigation. However, the CSTR validated existing course content/core concepts as essential and highlighted additional opportunities for content additions/modifications. It is reasonable to contend all four cases would have benefited had the officers completed SAI-VCERT before conducting the investigation.

WSCJTC requested APD submit four case files that met review criteria and were mutually agreed upon with the prosecutor's office. Of the four cases reviewed, 75% were misaligned with SAI-VCERT trauma-informed best practices, including but limited to, misinterpreting signs of trauma, spending little to no time in rapport building, use of closed questions, directive instead of invitational language, no documentation of connecting survivors with advocacy, minimal to no reflection of a victim's words in reports, missed opportunities for utilizing outcry witnesses, using perjury statements with victims, and conducting victim pat downs (two of the four cases document this occurrence).

The Department excelled in coordination with external agencies to collect evidence, particularly digital evidence in one case specifically. These efforts bolstered the strength of that case and were instrumental to it being charged. Another officer, despite not having been through SAI-VCERT applied the skill of “tracking”, which is the ability to pay attention to the human nervous system and guide its regulation. This officer noticed that the interviewee was shaking and reminded them they can take a break. Had they been through the SAI-VCERT course, the officer would have likely recognized the victim’s nervous system was activated causing shaking and been able to offer a CRM wellness skill to help reset the victim’s nervous system. The detective would have also recognized the victim’s need for an immediate SANE examination and arranged for one prior to interviewing.

A working relationship between APD and the Snohomish County Prosecutor exists. The two agencies are encouraged to further collaborate by remaining in regular communication, debriefing after case milestones/significant accomplishments, and exploring ways to best overcome consent defense strategies together.

Advocacy is a vital service and resource for survivors of sexual assault. The CSTR found no indications that advocacy was offered or utilized. APD reports working closely with their children’s advocacy center but being less familiar with services offered by the advocacy center serving adults. The PM facilitated an e-introduction between the two and APD is encouraged to continue communicating with Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse to support enhanced referrals and access to advocacy.

APD has had two SAI-VCERT trained officers leave the department. It is recommended that the five remaining APD officers serve as primary investigators for adult sex crimes until additional officers become trained. Adult sexual assault investigations account for less than 10% percent of all detective investigations annually, thus there is immediate opportunity to consider how to best staff for these crimes, mentor investigators, and ensure detectives who need SAI-VCERT training can attend. APD leadership is encouraged to continue building a culture of care and responsiveness to sexual violence by prioritizing initial and ongoing training.

The review strongly affirmed the importance of SAI-VCERT training content. It also highlighted the importance of patrol being equipped for responding to sexual assault calls. The legislature may wish to consider mandating sexual assault training for patrol officers. WSCJTC already has a two-hour Patrol Officer Response to Sexual Assault Online Training developed. It is located in the online learning portal ACADIS for officers to access statewide as part of ongoing learning.

The CSTR finds that opportunities for law enforcement (LE) to receive training (particularly those where practice interviewing techniques that include reality-based scenarios utilizing actors are available) are essential to deepening officer knowledge and wellness skill application.

“As actors, we have received specialized trauma training. We are committed to representing the needs and common responses of survivors who have experienced harm. It is a tremendous honor to be part of a project that increases skills for victim engagement. I’ve been able to experience and witness growth from interview to interview in my role.”

-Dora Lainer – SAI-VCERT Actor



SAI-VCERT BACKGROUND

The Sexual Assault Investigations – Victim Centered Engagement and Resiliency Tactics (SAI-VCERT) training at WSCJTC is mandated through [RCW 43.101.272](#), as training for persons investigating adult sexual assault, with the following description:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the commission shall provide ongoing specialized, intensive, and integrative training for persons responsible for investigating sexual assault and other gender-based violence involving adult victims, and the highest ranking supervisors and commanders overseeing sexual assault and other gender-based violence investigations. The training must be based on a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to responding to sexual assault. Among other subjects, the training must include content on the neurobiology of trauma and trauma-informed interviewing, counseling, and investigative techniques.

(2) The training must: Be based on research-based practices and standards; offer participants an opportunity to practice interview skills and receive feedback from instructors; minimize the trauma of all persons who are interviewed during abuse investigations; provide methods of reducing the number of investigative interviews necessary whenever possible; assure, to the extent possible, that investigative interviews are thorough, objective, and complete; recognize needs of special populations; recognize the nature and consequences of victimization; require investigative interviews to be conducted in a manner most likely to permit the interviewed persons the maximum emotional comfort under the circumstances; address record retention and retrieval; address documentation of investigative interviews; and educate investigators on the best practices for notifying victims of the results of forensic analysis of sexual assault kits and other significant events in the investigative process, including for active investigations and cold cases.

(3) In developing the training, the commission shall seek advice from the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs, the Washington coalition of sexual assault programs, and experts on sexual assault, gender-based violence, and the neurobiology of trauma. The commission shall consult with the Washington association of prosecuting attorneys in an effort to design training containing consistent elements for all professionals engaged in interviewing and interacting with sexual assault victims in the criminal justice system.

(4) Officers assigned to regularly investigate sexual assault and other gender-based violence involving adult victims and the highest ranking supervisors and commanders overseeing those investigations shall complete the training within one year of being assigned.

VCERT includes mock-interviews where professional actors portray sexual assault victims and interview facilitators guide participants in trauma-informed, victim-centered interview exercises. Participants report mock interviews are highly beneficial to their learning.

The SAI-VCERT course was developed and is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of experienced law enforcement investigators, therapists, advocates, a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), a civil attorney, and prosecutors, which is consistent with the collaborative investigative approach taught in the course. Instructors, facilitators, and actors are trained in the Trauma Resource Institute's Community Resiliency Model® wellness skills. These skills bolster victim engagement, well-being, and recall while reporting information about the assault.

In addition to its focus on victim interviewing, the SAI-VCERT course includes an overview of suspect-focused investigations, evidence collection, report writing/documentation, considerations of equity in SAI cases, relevant Washington State statutes and prosecution perspectives on consent, documentation, and drug and alcohol-facilitated assaults. The course ends with officer resiliency.

SAI-VCERT course learning objectives are as follows:

- Understand and recognize the nature and consequences of victimization.
- Understand and describe how specific experiences impact victim trauma, memory, reactions, and behavior.
- Understand how investigator interpretation of victim behaviors impact sexual assault cases.
- Identify strategies to work with all victims to facilitate trust and communication.
- Conduct interviews utilizing a research-based model that integrates wellness skills designed to minimize victim trauma, provide maximum emotional comfort, reduce the number of interviews, and foster resilience.
- Conduct objective, thorough, and complete investigations that articulate elements of the identified crime, while utilizing physical, psychological, and sensory evidence to build a strong case.
- Understand the importance of working with a multi-disciplinary team.

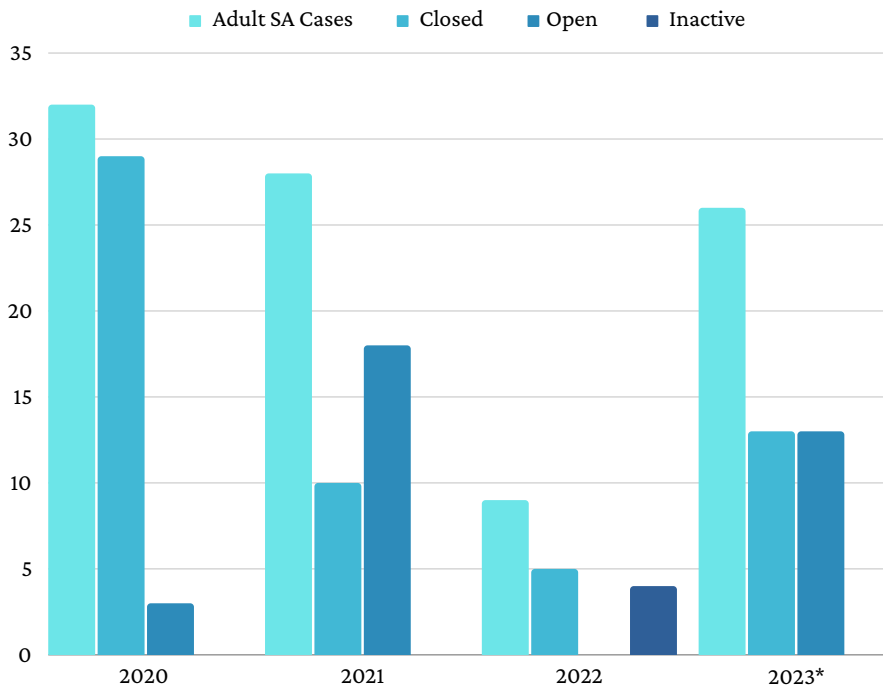
Since November 2018, the WSCJTC has trained 828 participants. 166 people have attended SAI-VCERT in the last year. SAI-VCERT is currently delivered online via Zoom. The cost of returning to in-person trainings coupled with limited staffing resources at Departments statewide and physical space limitations at WSCJTC informed our decision. SAI-VCERT attendees report the online format works well and have expressed appreciation for being able to attend virtually.

APD REPORTING DATA

Reporting Statistics Responsive to CSTR

The Arlington Police Department provided data on sexual assault (SA) adult victim cases from the years 2019-2023*. The Department reports in their online annual report that they seek to limit their detective’s caseloads to 120 cases per year to maintain balance between the investigator’s mental health, case integrity, and burn out. However, this has been unattainable during the reporting periods due to being understaffed and reporting levels across all crimes. Below is a table of adult sexual assault cases reported and case status denoted as open, closed, or inactive. The Department defines “closed” as a case that has been filed with the prosecutor’s office. “Inactive” indicates that the case has no further leads at this time.

Adult Sexual Assault Annual Case Data

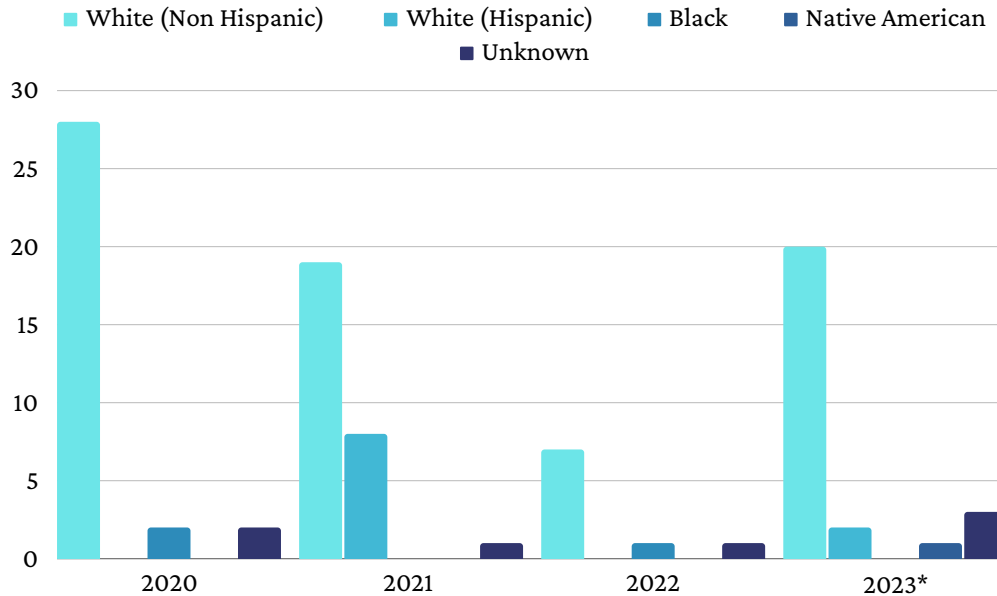


*The 2023 calendar year had not ended by time of review thus 2023 is reflects reports from Jan-September 2023 only.

A small percentage of cases is not uncommon, as sexual assault is vastly underreported, however, this data may indicate that enhancing community connections with partners, particularly advocacy is warranted to enhance referral processes and response to adult sexual assault victims.

APD REPORTING DATA

Subject Race and Ethnicity



*The 2023 calendar year had not ended by time of review thus 2023 is reflects reports from Jan-September 2023 only.

The majority of residents (76%) in Arlington are white which is reflected in APD service data. There are low rates of reporting from communities of color in relation to census population demographic data. Particularly noteworthy is the lack of any reports from persons identified as Asian, where Asians represent 6% of the community populus. As part of regular evaluation practices, the Department is encouraged to do comparative analysis to census data. This can help inform whether those served are reflective of the community at large, create opportunities to identify and reduce potential barriers to reporting, and build relationships.

CASE SYSTEMS TRAINING REVIEW PROCESS

Case Systems Training Review Steps

Conducted by the WSCJTC

Development

- Legislative support and funding
- Identify and convene review team
- Identify departments and timelines
- Update checklists and surveys

Implementation

- Notify selected departments
- Departments identify cases per criteria
- Cases are uploaded to Box.com
- CSTR teams review files

Analysis

- Assessment of alignment with training objectives
- Identification of patterns or practices misaligned with training objectives
- Analyze sexual assault reporting statistics
- Analyze surveys

Findings

- Team leads meet with reviewers and PM
- PM and team leads review results with Det. Sgt.
- Report drafted and approvals coordinated
- Report submission

CASE SYSTEMS TRAINING REVIEW PROCESS

In September 2023, former CSTR review members representing legal, law enforcement, and advocacy disciplines were selected to participate in the 2023 CSTR process. All but one of the reviewers is an instructor/facilitator for the SAI-VCERT course and brings expertise to the process.

Letters were sent to the Arlington Police Department and the Snohomish County Prosecutors office on September 25, 2023, formally communicating their CSTR involvement, requesting documents, and review deadlines. These letters are included as attachments 1 and 2. APD selected and submitted four cases according to criteria identified by WSCJTC. This criterion is included with the letters to the departments (Attachment 3).

The CSTR team convened in early October for a kickoff meeting where best practices and training goals were reviewed and discussed. All members signed a team agreement prior to conducting the review which outlined CSTR member confidentiality requirements and expectations (Attachment 4).

Cases were reviewed by the CSTR team and coordinated with a team lead to assess trends or patterns. The results of these reviews were conveyed to the Program Manager (PM) by the lead. Subsequently, the PM and team lead held a meeting via Zoom with the Sergeant overseeing sexual assault detectives at APD to discuss the CSTR results and policies or practices. Included as Attachments 5 and 6 to this report are the Review Checklist Form and Team Results Form used by CSTR team members.

As part of the review process, WSCJTC sent APD SAI-VCERT attendees a survey to collect information about how training has informed their work.

- 100% of respondents stated they feel more equipped to conduct interviews or investigations involving sexual assault.
- 100% report that since taking the SAI VCERT, their interviews with victims and survivors are conducted with a trauma-informed approach.

CASE SYSTEMS TRAINING REVIEW PROCESS

The SAI program requested feedback from CSTR members about their experience conducting the case review this year. CSTR members provided the PM feedback that they had the necessary tools and support to complete the review in an organized, timely, and thorough manner. They noted and as was recommended in the 2022 CSTR legislative report, having field survey results while assessing cases would be beneficial. This was unable to be accomplished this year due to having a compressed timeline at WSCJTC (the PM began employment the first week of September). Having surveys completed prior to starting case reviews will remain a goal for implementation in 2024.

SAI-VCERT MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Course Participants. There is not a formal exam for the course. However, participants are evaluated by the interview facilitators during their pass/fail interviewing exercises with professional actors portraying sexual assault victims and survivors. The facilitators and actors provide feedback based on the trauma-informed guidelines provided to participants. Although occasionally a participant will falter in the initial interview, through guidance from facilitators and watching/receiving feedback from peers, they have consistently re-calibrated to overcome earlier challenges in the second practice interview.

Training. In terms of how the training is measured, we rely on post-course evaluations from the participants and the takeaways reported verbally at the conclusion of the class. We have made several modifications to the course since its inception in November 2018 in response to these evaluations.

Case Systems Training Review (CSTR) as a Measurement. We rely on the CSTR process to help inform SAI-VCERT training content annually.

“Every officer in Washington should take this class. I will be able to apply this to all my investigations, not just sexual assault cases.”

“I wish I had this training when I started”.

“Can we have more? I learned so much and want to do more interviews!”

“Wow, just wow! I look back on past cases and they make more sense now.”

“I’ve been doing this for over twenty years and learned a lot! I can see things I’d do differently.”

“I’m an old dog who just got new tricks.”

-SAI-VCERT Class Participant Feedback

CSTR SURVEY RESULTS

INVESTIGATORS

A 24-question survey was sent to all Arlington officers who have attended a SAI- VCERT course. The survey is designed to capture an investigator's perception, takeaways, and reliance of the VCERT materials. A copy of the survey can be found under Attachment 7.

Two of the seven Arlington SAI-VCERT class graduates have since left the Department, leaving a total of five SAI-VCERT trained officers. Four out of five Arlington detectives responded to the survey. All report favorable and ongoing benefits of VCERT, particularly relating to their understanding of trauma during victim interviews and overall interactions.

Trauma. 100% of respondents said that they either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that the SAI-VCERT course helped them to understand the impact of trauma on victims and survivors of sexual assault.

All respondents report that since the training, they have an increased understanding of and interest in the impacts of trauma.

100% of investigators report they have been able to rely on this understanding when engaging with victims, particularly during the interview and in their case documentation. All respondents were able to properly identify common trauma responses.

100% of respondents successfully identified the importance of documenting observations over their personal opinions within reports.

Interviewing. All respondents said they incorporate rapport building in the interview process and many investigators noted tailoring questions specifically to each victim to get to know them better. Additionally, they have noticed a significant difference in victims providing more detailed responses and more success conducting a thorough interview when they have taken the time to do rapport building at the beginning of the interview. Respondents also reported increased comfort in asking open-ended questions and including sensory-based questions in their interviews with victims to help recall memory and get more detailed information about the assault.

CSTR SURVEY RESULTS

Victim support. Since the training, investigators reported an overall increase in providing victim support and advocacy services. Respondents were asked to identify potential barriers to victims reporting a sexual assault and all were able to properly identify barriers, with the most common being shame and fear of retaliation.

Additionally, all respondents who have investigated sexual assault cases since the training reported that overall, they feel better equipped during their interactions with sexual assault victims and have a deeper understanding of their needs.

Resiliency & wellness skills. Respondents were able to properly identify reasons why resiliency skills were useful when working with victims of trauma, particularly related to regulating the nervous system in order to obtain more information during an interview. The most reported Community Resiliency Model® (CRM) skill utilized with victims was grounding, which entails guiding back into the present moment by suggesting they notice any contact they have with surfaces (for instance, hands to a table or feet to a floor). Investigators shared that this skill was helpful for victims who become activated during an interview as a quick way to help bring them back into what CRM refers to as their Resiliency Zone and continue with the interview.

In addition, 100% of respondents reported that spending time in rapport building helped them to identify victim resources which they could use in times of victim nervous system activation. 75% of respondents also reported being able to use the resiliency/wellness skills to build on their own personal resiliency.

Training. Respondent ongoing training needs were identified through the survey. Respondents were asked to choose from a list of training topics, and then had the opportunity to add any additional training topics they felt might be helpful to them. The training topics with the most interest included evidence collection/investigative practices, SAK's, and trauma.

Investigative process. Since the training, respondents report an increased understanding of investigatory practices for sexual assault cases. Investigators were able to properly identify the difference between mental incapacity and physical helplessness, what constitutes consent in sexual assault cases, and all the components of the definition of sexual assault.

100% of respondents stated the training has improved or enhanced their response to crime victims and witnesses beyond sexual assault crimes.

CSTR SURVEY RESULTS

PROSECUTORS

According to the three survey respondents from the Snohomish Prosecutors Attorney's Office (Attachment 9), the most common barrier to a case being submitted for charges are due to a lack of evidence or insufficient evidence (suggesting the need for more thorough investigations) and the ability to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt (suggesting the need for additional training on overcoming consent defenses). Other barriers reported include statute of limitations, lack of victim participation, and delayed reports. The CSTR suggests the prosecutor and LE connect to specifically discuss overcoming consent defense strategies and evidence needs. This may lead to more accepted cases.

When asked about what training topic and or areas of emphasis within topics prosecutors recommended for law enforcement they shared:

- The importance of not forming an opinion as to victim credibility or the veracity of the allegations
- Examination of personal biases and how it may impact one's response to sex crimes
- What evidence may be present at a scene and best practice for collection

- Patrol specific- ensuring to separate involved parties when talking with them
- Understanding Intimate Partner Sexual Violence (IPSV)
- Trauma informed responses
- When booking is appropriate

Excepting booking practices, the recommended training topics are included in WSCJTC's SAI-VCERT and PORSA trainings.

ADVOCATES

Two advocates from Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse responded to the CSTR survey (Attachment 9) to share their experiences working with law enforcement in the Snohomish County area from a victim's perspective. The advocates identified several barriers to victims reporting sexual assault crimes to law enforcement, with the most common responses being a fear of being blamed, fear of not being believed, a fear of the perpetrator/suspect retaliating, lack of trust, and are discouraged by the length of time the criminal justice process takes for case resolution. All these identified barriers are covered in the VCERT course to bring awareness to officers about victims' fears of engaging with the criminal justice system and trauma responses that often follow a sexual assault (understanding neurobiology of trauma).

When asked about what training areas and/or emphasis within topics would they recommend for detectives/investigators, advocates responded with working with advocates, connecting victims to advocacy services, the neurobiology of trauma, drug facilitated sexual assault, sex trafficking, and understanding dating sites (how offenders are using them and how to best collect digital evidence from these sites). They also stressed the importance of patrol being trained on how to respond to sexual assault calls.

Advocates shared best practices they have observed in Snohomish County implemented by law enforcement in responses to sexual assaults:

- Believing victims from the beginning.
- Officers understanding the neurobiology of trauma and being gentle with victims after they have just experienced a traumatic event.
- Providing the opportunity to pause or take breaks during the interview process.
- Educating the victim about the criminal justice system, investigative process, next steps, etc.

The advocate survey can be found as attachment 9.

PAST SAI-VCERT PARTICIPANT CORE CLASS TAKEAWAYS



CSTR OUTCOMES

The Arlington Police Department was selected for the 2023 CSTR by the WSCJTC SAI program manager (PM). APD showed a commitment to obtaining and applying SAI-VCERT training content.

Members of the CSTR team reviewed four closed sexual assault cases spanning across four years (One case each from 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2022) and including three different investigators. Only one involved an investigator who remains with the department; however, he had not taken the SAI-VCERT training at the time of the investigation.

Once cases were reviewed by CSTR members, the PM and team lead met with the Sergeant overseeing sexual assault investigations at APD to discuss results and department policies and practices. As part of the review process, sexual assault reporting statistics were provided by the department and detectives and sergeants overseeing sexual assault cases also completed surveys related to training and their work.

To date of this report, seven APD officers had completed the SAI-VCERT class. Please note this is a corrected data point from the WSCJTC initial request letter which stated Arlington had sent ten officers (there was an administrative error). Two officers have departed the Department since receiving SAI-VCERT training, leaving a total of five detectives who are trained in SAI-VCERT. Given the complexity and specialization of sexual assault responses, the CSTR team suggests these five be primary investigators for adult SA crimes until others can be trained.

Of the cases reviewed, no officer or detective had completed the SAI-VCERT course prior to their investigation. 75% of the cases reviewed did not align with core SAI-VCERT training. It is evident that APD will benefit from course attendance and the ability to integrate course content into their operations.

Reviewers determined that APD policies and practices in adult sexual assault investigations were generally inconsistent with research-based, national best practices included in SAI-VCERT trainings and modeled by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI). Key practices include:

- Coordination of advocacy personnel and services
- Following up on time-sensitive evidence
- Conducting victim-centered interviews
- Identifying and interviewing witnesses
- Recording interviews
- Create or identify a welcoming environment for victim interviews
- A thoroughly documented investigation
- Empowering a victim during the interview
- Provision of additional resources to the victim
- Using victim language in a report
- Obtaining an outcry witness statement
- Thoroughly conducted investigations
- Strong suspect interviews
- Avoid asking victims what they want as a case outcome
- Avoid the inclusion of perjury statements with victims

Implementing trauma-informed victim interviewing techniques yields evidence in the forms of victim statements, investigator observations of victim behaviors, and identification of corroborative evidence. These practices, their degree of implementation and department considerations were discussed with APD during the PM and Sergeant meeting.

APD is encouraged to use the SAI-VCERT case review forms (Appendix 5, 6) to conduct their own internal case review process in efforts to further inform their work and gauge implementation of best practices taught in SAI-VCERT.

Advocacy

In Washington State, each county has a community sexual assault program (CSAP) who provides free, confidential, 24/7 support and crisis intervention to persons impacted by sexual violence. Sexual assault victims have the right to have advocates present with them. This right is enumerated in RCW 70.125.110. It is important that officers can skillfully introduce advocacy as it increases the likelihood of victims being able to access healing support/resources and remaining engaged with the criminal justice system. The SAI-VCERT program trains on the importance of advocacy and partnering for success.

The CSTR found no indication that advocacy was offered or utilized. The CSTR recommend APD document if an advocate was offered and when they are present.

APD reports a strong familiarity with their local children's advocacy center services, but less so with adult advocacy services provided through Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse. After the case review, APD's Detective Sergeant connected with Providence's Manager in efforts to bolster referrals and connection.

Following Up on Time Sensitive Evidence

Identifying and following up timely on evidence contributes to successful investigations. It is recommended that APD assign adult SA cases to SAI-VCERT trained detectives and for patrol to complete PORSA training.

A trauma-informed approach by patrol officers can lead to increased criminal justice participation (victim reporting, providing statements, giving information, supplying evidence, and testifying) by victims and therefore higher rates of accountability for offenders. Since the patrol officer is typically the initial encounter with the criminal justice system and process, the interaction between the officer and victim may be critical to the outcome of the case.

Reviewers noted case quality of the investigations were hindered by patrol officer interactions. These examples from patrol included:

- Failure to recognize possible physical evidence and the importance of a timely SANE examination. The case was referred to a detective for follow-up which resulted in a ten-day delay
- Inclusion of opinion in reports
- Not documenting victim disposition
- Requested the victim call the suspect while the officer was there so he could "find out his version" of what happened. This demonstrated a lack of believing what the victim reported.

A 2-hour online training specific for Patrol (developed by the SAI Program at WSCJTC) is currently available to law enforcement statewide through the Acadis portal. As of November 2023, twenty-eight APD officers have completed PORSA online training.

Conducting Victim-Centered Interviews

SAI-VCERT trains on the neurobiology of trauma. This includes equipping interviewers to understand, listen, and collect information about biology-based victim responses to trauma, such as impacts to victim cognition and behavior.

In 2022, Washington became the 11th state to endorse and incorporate EVAWI's start by believing framework to investigations. It supports comprehensive investigations strategies that demonstrate to victims that their report has merit and will be investigated fully.

The case review process identified areas of misalignment. One case example includes patrol asking a victim to call the suspect so law enforcement could hear the suspect and "get their side of the story". This conveys disbelief rather than the need to complete a balanced and thorough investigation by talking to both parties.

Welcoming Environment

It was determined through the CSTR and confirmed by the Detective Sergeant that APD does not have a soft room or an alternative location to conduct victim interviews.

APD is encouraged to "soften" one of their four interview rooms to create a welcoming space for victim interviews or to locate an alternative interview location, for example, a space within an advocacy center for these types of interviews. Creating an environment that feels physically and emotionally safe for victims has been shown to increase victim engagement and support their wellness. Softening a room may include replacing the existing furniture with a small sofa, a couple chairs, blankets, and having bottled water available. EVAWI has numerous articles and trainings on creating welcoming environments that are free to APD.

A non-trauma informed practice of patting down victims before an interview was documented in half of reviewed case files reviewed. When APD was questioned about this, reviewers were assured that pat-down practices of sexual assault victims are not occurring as standard procedure and that the two case files where this occurred can be linked to one specific officer who is no longer with the department.

The use of perjury statements with victims was observed across cases. Victims were asked to declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that what they shared was true and correct. It is possible that asking this of suspects may have translated into victim interview practices. APD is encouraged to review this misaligned practice in consultation with the Prosecutor's Office.

A Thoroughly Documented Investigation

The majority of investigations appeared to be incomplete and more investigative steps could have been pursued. Because of the limited time frame allotted to investigative steps and techniques during the VCERT training, APD is encouraged to take advanced SAI and other WSCJTC offerings.

The CSTR found an absence of correspondence with the prosecutor outside of notes of declinations. One declination from the Prosecutors Office reads, "...a jury will not have sufficient evidence to accept (vic's) statement of events over (defendants)," and made note that the victim had invited the accused out the night of the incident. There is an opportunity to discuss what additional evidence may have been helpful in this case and to recognize the inadvertent potential reinforcement of rape myths by focusing on noting the victim's rather than suspect's behavior in the declination.

Recording Interviews

The CSTR noted that victim and suspect interviews were inconsistently recorded. Some interviews were video and audio recorded, others just audio, and some limited to written report. This is attributed to differences applied by responders during COVID and the Department not having body worn cameras until spring 2022. With changes to law regarding recording requirements, consistency is expected to be found if selected for a future case review.

Victim Language

A victim's words document and reconstruct the reality of their experience. It is important to capture them accurately.

The CSTR trains to, and underscores the importance of, documenting victim, suspect, and witness words with the use of quotations in reports to reflect actual statements. The CSTR found the use of consensual language when referring to a suspect's description in one case file. Without quotes it was unclear as to whether the description was the report writer's or the suspect's.

Strong Suspect Interviews

The CSTR trains to the importance of thorough suspect interviews.

The CSTR shared difficulty accessing suspect interview practices in relation to SAI-VCERT due to varying methods and depth of documentation (written or video) provided. Some investigations appeared to be incomplete and more investigative steps could have been pursued. Limited time is allotted to investigative steps and techniques during the VCERT training. APD is encouraged to explore other suspect interviewing training offered through WSCJTC such as the SAI Advanced Suspect Interviewing Class.

When APD was asked about not conforming with SAI-VCERT principles, such as not recording witness statements, inclusion of perjury statements, lack of a welcoming environment, pat-downs of victims, inconsistent documentation (recorded vs written) of interviews of victims and suspects, and no documented connection to advocacy supports; the Sergeant reported that many practices pre-dated his supervisory role.

The Detective Sergeant assumed his role a year ago and has shown a strong commitment to obtaining sexual assault training for himself and staff including traveling across the State for the WSCJTC's first back in person post COVID SAI-VCERT training. APD training participants were engaged and receptive to course content.

In meeting with APD to discuss case outcomes, the Department exemplified strong receptiveness to feedback and was solution oriented. APD reports that post SAI-VCERT attendance, principles are being integrated and applied to investigations. The Detective Sergeant, dedicated to learning, exclaimed "Come back in four years and tell us how we are doing".

Although reviewers ascertained that the majority of the cases reviewed contained content that may not have fully achieved training objectives or demonstrated best practices, most of these actions (or inactions) have either already been addressed, are in process, or were isolated events. APD inconsistencies or absences of trauma-informed practices can be addressed with training and commitment to integrate principles into agency operations, practices, and culture.

TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR APD

- Maintaining emphasis on training (to include the EVAWI courses available for free to all VCERT participants).
- Prioritize assigning SAI-VCERT trained investigators to adult sexual assault cases.
- Encouraging prosecutor attendance in the SAI-VCERT course.
- Conducting regular, formal case debriefs with prosecutors.
- Participate/endorse EVAWI's Start By Believing campaign.
- Encourage all APD patrol officers to complete PORSA within a year of assignment.
- Educating all levels of the department – patrol, patrol supervisors, other units investigating crimes against people, and leadership – on trauma-informed interviewing and victim-centered/offender-focused investigations (especially on sexually motivated crimes) training opportunities through the WSCJTC SAI program.
- Engage in multi-disciplinary team meetings to further advance sexual assault response for adult victims.
- Conduct a future internal case file review process.

FOR WSCJTC

Reviewer takeaways from the 2023 CSTR include the following recommendations for WSCJTC SAI-VCERT training:

- Maintain current training content areas.
- Increase content regarding overcoming a consent defense.
- Develop additional opportunities to explore responding to survivors with mental health needs/in mental health crisis.
- Address victim pat downs during establishing a welcoming environment content.
- Add/create resources regarding perjury affidavits.
- Create additional training opportunities and resources for suspect interviewing.

The PM will meet with the training team in January 2024 to discuss and assess updating training content to include these recommendations, and which topics and/or instructor(s) or whether interview exercises during the course are best options to expand on them.

LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

Upon completion, our case review team have identified two issues the Legislature may wish to consider for possible action.

1. Consider a training mandate for patrol officers responding to adult sexual assault victims.

Patrol may be the first point of contact a sexual assault victim has with law enforcement. Equipping patrol with essential information and resources will help them respond in victim-centered trauma-informed ways that minimize secondary victimizations of victims and supports identification and evidence preservation. Often detectives do not have the authority or influence over what training patrol receives. A mandate would help build the capacity of patrol officers statewide.

2. Maintain and consider additional investment in advanced SAI training which provide mock-interview opportunities for officers.

A key learning component of the SAI-VCERT course is the opportunity for officers to participate in mock interviews with actors portraying sexual assault victims. Maintaining a qualified and substantive pool of actors is an important part of the program. As advanced trainings become implemented, additional resources are needed to pay contract actors and manage actor coordination related program needs.

WSCJTC SAI PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Course Descriptions

SAI-VCERT

The Sexual Assault Investigations – Victim Centered Engagement and Resiliency Tactics (SAI-VCERT) training at WSCJTC was mandated through RCW 43.101.272, as training for persons investigating adult sexual assault.

SAI-VCERT is designed primarily as a victim interviewing course, and as a mechanism to educate and equip officers to recognize and adapt communications for victims who have been sexually assaulted. The course incorporates End Violence Against Women International's (<https://evawintl.org/>) research-based best practices in interviewing and investigations towards offender accountability.

The SAI-VCERT class is designed to include practice interviews staffed with professional actors portraying sexual assault victims and interview facilitators to guide participants in trauma-informed, victim-centered interview exercises. Additionally, it is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of experienced law enforcement investigators, therapists, advocates, a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), a civil attorney, and prosecutors, which is consistent with the collaborative investigative approach taught in the course. Instructors, facilitators, and actors are trained in the Trauma Resource Institute's Community Resiliency Model® wellness skills included to bolster training team, officer engagement, awareness, and capacity, as well as increase victim well-being, endurance, and recall as they provide information about the assault.

Post-VCERT EVAWI Courses

WSCJTC contracted with EVAWI to make all of their online trainings and webinars available to officers who have completed the SAI-VCERT training. Examples of courses offered by EVAWI include webinars such as "Effective Victim Interviewing," "Ten Steps to Consider When Conducting a Sexual Assault Investigation," "Traditional Law Enforcement Interrogation Methods Versus the Trauma-Informed Interviewing Process," and "Stalking: Slow Motion Homicide." These trainings can be found at <https://evawintl.org/>.

APD was reminded of free access to EVAWI courses during case review debrief and was re-sent instructions for accessing these courses under the WSCJTC contract.

SAI- Patrol Officer Response to Sexual Assaults (PORSAs)

This is a 2-hour online training offered in Acadis, WSCJTC's online training platform, which includes knowledge checks to assess and emphasize key information concepts. Located under SAI, PORSAs provides an overview of materials from the SAI-VCERT course, including an explanation of trauma and its impacts and multi-disciplinary team perspectives on working with victims, collecting evidence, and conducting investigations on sexual assault reporting. Although this course is not mandated, departments are strongly encouraged to assign this training to patrol officers due to their interactions with sexual assault victims and the importance of aligning best practices with VCERT trained investigators. Completion of this course qualifies for two of the annual 24-hour training requirements for Washington peace officers.

APD is encouraged to prioritize having patrol officers take the PORSAs online class. In one of the cases reviewed, the responding patrol officer didn't collect physical evidence at the time of response and there was over a week before the case was assigned and detective follow-up established. The opportunity to obtain valuable evidence was missed.

BLEA Sex Crimes

In April 2022, members of the SAI training team updated the Sex Crimes class taught to police recruits during their Basic academy. The materials provided to recruits represent a summary of SAI-VCERT material, with an emphasis on trauma-informed interactions and responses on sexual assault or other cases involving physical violence. Ensuring centralization and utilization of this training across regional training centers is a priority, as is creating a recording for enhanced continuity of delivery and use as a refresher course. It was the SAI program's hope to have a recording of this 3-hour class included in Acadis Fall 2023, however, due to a program transition, it is anticipated to be completed in March 2024. Officers who have taken the PORSAs training will be encouraged to take this 3-hour course in support of their annual 24-hour training requirement.

Advanced Training Course

Offering one advanced refresher course for SAI-VCERT graduates is prioritized for Summer 2024. The SAI program has developed a suspect interviewing course centered around a sexual assault case scenario. This class includes an overview of trauma-informed interviewing for victims and witnesses but is primarily focused on suspect interviewing. As with the SAI-VCERT course, this training will also provide participants with the opportunity to interview live actors. The actors will be portraying suspects in a sexual assault case. The classes are resource intensive and costly. Additional funding from the legislature will help support offering meaningful learning opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The SAI program at WSCJTC has continued to deepen its work and offer comprehensive training statewide. Case reviews are one tool the Commission relies upon to inform and examine the impact of the WSCJTC SAI-VCERT training. The 2023 CSTR was unable to determine the impact of SAI-VCERT training interview practices at APD, because cases submitted by the Department did not involve any officers who had attended SAI-VCERT prior to conducting the investigation. However, the review clearly demonstrates the value of the existing SAI-VCERT training content and instruction modality. It can be contented that the four cases examined would have been strengthened by applying key investigation and trauma-informed principles taught in VCERT.

APD currently has five investigators who have completed SAI-VCERT. It is suggested that they take the lead on adult sexual assault investigations while mentoring and training of other staff is underway.

Patrol officer responses to victims can greatly impact case outcomes and were observed through review. CSTR reviewers were unable to identify the apparent benefits of PORSA to APD, as the investigators on the four cases submitted hadn't taken the PORSA training. Twenty-eight APD officers have completed PORSA at time of reporting. We encourage PORSA video training be prioritized for patrol officers within a year of assignment.

Enhancing sexual violence investigations is the responsibility of the individual Department. The Detective Sergeant plays a big role in creating a culture of care and response. The APD Detective Sergeant has been in his role less than a year but has made it a priority for his detectives to get training. It is expected going forward that with five trained detectives, intentionality, and an invested Sergeant, that sexual assault case investigations will display continuity and adherence to best practices for conducting trauma informed victim interviews with those who have been hurt or harmed by sexual violence.

Through the CSTR, WSCJTC is able to help departments identify practices and procedures that can enhance sexual violence cause outcomes. The process also provides the SAI program the opportunity to examine and modify our trainings through this process. We look forward to ongoing collaborations and communications with officers, departments, and legislators to ensure we equip police officers throughout the State with the latest information and skills to best address sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence.



ATTACHMENTS

1. CSTR Notification Letter to the Arlington Police Department, dated 9.25.2023
2. CSTR Notification Letter to the Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office, dated 9.25.2023
3. Case Review Checklist Form
4. CSTR Team Agreement 2023
5. Case Review Checklist
6. Case Review Outcomes Summary Form
7. Detective Survey Questions
8. Prosecutor Survey Questions
9. Advocate Survey Questions

ATTACHMENT 1



WASHINGTON STATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING COMMISSION

Monica A. Alexander, Executive Director

19010 1st Avenue South • Burien, WA 98148 • Phone: 206-835-7300 • www.cjtc.wa.gov

September 25, 2023

ELECTRONICALLY DELIVERED

Chief Jonathan Ventura
Arlington Police Department
110 E 3rd Street
Arlington, WA 98223

Dear Chief Ventura:

We are writing to notify you that the Arlington Police Department, along with the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office has been selected for the 2023 Case Systems Training Review project mandated under [House Bill 1109](#). The project is conducted by the Sexual Assault Investigations (SAI) training program within the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission (WSCJTC). The purpose of the review is to assess officer applications of trauma-informed, victim-centered interviewing practices as prescribed in the training and to identify training gaps or enhancements that may be applied.

The SAI-Victim-Centered Engagement and Resiliency Tactics (VCERT) course is mandated under [RCW 43.101.272](#) for officers assigned to regularly investigate sexual assault and other gender-based violence involving adult victims. It is also mandated for the highest-ranking supervisors and commanders overseeing these investigations. Training should be completed within a year of assignment. Our records indicate that since 2018, 10 Arlington Police Department officers have attended VCERT.

For the case review process, we request that pre-identified closed case files be made available for our review on or before October 23, 2023. Included with this letter is list of documents being sought from your department and the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office for review. Please designate a point of contact within your department for case review coordination purposes. We also request participation of a supervisor familiar with the content and outcome of these cases.

Case Systems Training Review results will be included in a December report to the Governor's Office. We've attached our 2022 report for your information and reference. Specific cases will not be identified in the report as it centers around revisions to the WSCJTC training. Any review results by the training team will be verbally briefed to the respective department prior to inclusion, please hold November 2, 2023, for this purpose.

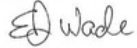
Please provide your point of contact information and direct any questions to SAI Program Manager, Andrea Piper-Wentland at (425) 766-1993 or andrea.piper.wentland@cjtc.wa.gov.

Thanks in advance for your attention to this request and support.

Sincerely,

TRAINING THE GUARDIANS OF DEMOCRACY

Chief Ventura
September 21, 2023
Page 2



Ed Wade
Assistant Director

Enclosures (2)

Cc: Jason Cummings, Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney
Bart Hayes, Advanced Training Division Manager
Andrea Piper-Wentland, Sexual Assault Investigations Program Manager
Jerrell Wills, Deputy Director

TRAINING THE GUARDIANS OF DEMOCRACY

ATTACHMENT 2



WASHINGTON STATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING COMMISSION

Monica A. Alexander, Executive Director

19010 1st Avenue South • Burien, WA 98148 • Phone: 206-835-7300 • www.cjtc.wa.gov

September 25, 2023

ELECTRONICALLY DELIVERED

Jason Cummings
Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney
3000 Rockefeller, M/S 504
Everett, WA 98201

Dear Mr. Cummings:

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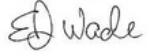
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Thanks in advance for your attention to this request and support.

TRAINING THE GUARDIANS OF DEMOCRACY

Jason Cummings
September 21, 2023
Page 2

Sincerely,



Ed Wade
Assistant Director

Enclosures (2)

Cc: Chief Jonathan Ventura, Arlington Police Department
Bart Hayes, Division Director, Advanced Training, WSCJTC
Andrea Piper-Wentland, Sexual Assault Investigations Program Manager, WSCJTC
Jerrell Wills, Deputy Director, WSCJTC

ATTACHMENT 3

WSCJTC Case Systems Training Review Requested Documents List

Select and submit a total of four closed sexual assault cases involving adult victims with varying prosecution outcomes (declined – prosecuted) from **September 2021 to September 2023**. If possible, include a mix of cases investigated by officers who have and have not attended the SAI-VCERT course. Once these cases have been mutually agreed upon, the Arlington Police Department and/or the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is requested to upload the listed documents contained in each case file and/or report (a secure link will be provided). Organize request materials according to the below categories:

1. Interview recordings
2. Investigative reports
3. Evidence
4. Miscellaneous

Law Enforcement Document List

1. A listing of the total number of adult sexual assault and/or rapes reported to the department and their investigative outcomes in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023.
2. Documentation of the race and/or ethnicity of victim, witnesses, and suspect(s);
3. Documentation of age of the victim, witnesses, and suspect(s);
4. Documentation indicating if the case involved a stranger assailant or non-stranger assailant;
5. Documentation whether voluntary or involuntary alcohol/drug facilitation was involved;
6. Documentation of advocate(s) contacted and utilized during interviews with the victim;
7. Written (notes and transcripts) and recorded documentation of interviews with victim(s), witnesses, and suspect(s);
8. Documentation of all evidence gathered, including physical evidence, digital evidence from social media, texts, and any communication between the victim(s) and witnesses, friends, family members, and suspect(s), etc.;
9. Documentation regarding testing and results from victim's sexual assault kit;
10. Documentation regarding 911 call evidence;
11. Results of crime lab testing (if any) of items belonging to suspect(s) and/or victim(s);
12. Documentation of suspect's criminal history, including any known prior arrests and prior protection orders;
13. Investigator's detailed documentation of the disposition of the case, including arrest, communications with victim wishing not to move forward, recantation, referral to prosecutors, etc.;

14. Documentation of communication with prosecutors, reasons for the referral of the case to prosecutors, the recommendation regarding the charge(s) for the suspect, etc.;
15. Documentation of coding of the case, especially documentation indicating the case was closed by exceptional clearance;
16. Documentation and explanation if the case was referred to the City Attorney's Office;

Prosecutorial Document List

1. Documentation of the race and/or ethnicity of victim, witnesses, and suspect(s);
2. Documentation of age of the victim, witnesses, and suspect(s);
3. Documentation of indicating if the case involved a stranger assailant or a non-stranger assailant, and/or whether it involved voluntary or involuntary alcohol/drug facilitation;
4. Documentation of all information relied on/reviewed by prosecutor in making charging decision, including but not limited to:
 - a. Documentation of all written (notes and transcripts) and recorded interviews with the victim, witnesses, and suspect(s);
 - b. Documentation of past criminal history and/or cases against the suspect/defendant;
 - c. Documentation regarding testing and results from victim's sexual assault kit;
 - d. Documentation of SANE notes and/or any other medical records obtained;
 - e. Documentation regarding any searches conducted;
 - f. Documentation of results of Crime Lab testing, if any.
5. Documentation of all communication with the victim;
6. Documentation of any existing or past protection orders involving the suspect and/or victim;
7. Documentation of the disposition/current status of the case and reasons for the specific disposition;
8. Documentation and explanation for a declination or plea agreement, including whether voluntary or involuntary use of drugs and/or alcohol was a factor;
9. If charges were filed, copies of all original and amended charging documents
10. Documentation of results of a jury trial (i.e., conviction, acquittal, hung jury);
11. If there was a conviction as a result of a guilty plea or trial, copies of:
 - a. Judgement and sentence;
 - b. Pre-sentencing report;
 - c. Victim impact statement.

ATTACHMENT 4



Sexual Assault Investigations Program,
Case Systems Training Review

Team Agreement Form

The Case Systems Training Review Project that the Sexual Assault Investigations (SAI) program at WA State Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) is leading in collaboration with SAI-Victim-Centered Engagement and Resiliency Tactics (VCERT) training team members involves a review of sexual assault cases from the Arlington Police Department. Members of the team will be accessing and reviewing actual recent, closed cases to assess the effectiveness of the VCERT course, as well as the development of additional training. To ensure the integrity of the process, respect the role of individual agency employees, and to protect the privacy of community residents, all case file review team members agree to the following:

1. The material collected and distributed to team members is intended only for use in conducting this case file review and to inform project staff and training stakeholders (with CJTC authorization) about noted themes in current response practices.
2. Team members will have access to case files and file information only for the purposes of the case review. At the end of the review, all written materials with case information will be turned in to Andrea Piper-Wentland.
3. Specific case information should not be discussed outside of the review project.
4. While careful work has been done to protect the identities of the parties involved in each case as well as those of responders, the nature of the documents remains sensitive. Any discussion of case file content will happen only in the context of the case file review process and only in the presence of team members who have agreed to this confidentiality statement. Additionally, should identities become known, review team members will not identify or discuss any individuals involved in any case materials, except as necessary within review team meetings.
5. Team members are not authorized to release or discuss any details of the review or case information to anyone outside of the review team or VCERT training team, except through coordination with the SAI program at CJTC and as agreed to through the release of findings and recommendations.

Team member signature: _____

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

ATTACHMENT 5



Sexual Assault Investigations Program
Review Team Members Only

Case Review Checklist

Observation Form

- Case ID Number: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Reviewer(s): Click or tap here to enter text.
- Investigator: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Department: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Case Open Date: Click or tap to enter a date.
- Case Closed Date: Click or tap to enter a date.
- Attended SAI-VCERT: Yes No
Date: Click or tap to enter a date.
- Advocate Org: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Others Involved (name/org): Click or tap here to enter text.

Case Synopsis

- Suspect Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Victim Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
- Key Facts: Click or tap here to enter text.

Initial Response

1.	Name/role of initial responder:			
	Name: Click or tap here to enter text.			
	Role: Click or tap here to enter text.			
	Yes	No	Unk/NA	
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did initial responder conduct the full investigation?
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the case referred to a Detective for investigation?
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Were advocacy services offered and explained?



5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Were advocacy services utilized?
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was a SANE exam offered and explained?
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was a SANE exam administered?
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coordination within dept./with outside resources as applicable. Describe:
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report includes victim's words/language? (use any quotes?)
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete, thorough documentation in case file.
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crime scene secured; proper evidence collected.
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the case involve the voluntary use of drugs/alcohol by the victim?
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the case involve the involuntary use of drugs/alcohol by the victim?
14.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the victim's race and/or ethnicity identified in the case file?
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the victim's age noted in the case file?
16.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the victim's gender identified in the case file?
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was an interpreter needed/used?
<p>Initial Response Comments:</p> <p>#1.</p> <p>#2</p> <p>#3</p> <p>#4</p> <p>#5</p> <p>#6</p>				



Sexual Assault Investigations Program
Review Team Members Only

#7
#8
#9
#10
#11
#12
#13
#14
#15
#16
#17



Additional Observations

Did the case involve a stranger or non-stranger assailant? Stranger Non-stranger

Was the case appropriately coded in the case file? Yes No

If 'yes', was the case coded as:

with an **arrest**

unfounded, or

with an **exceptional clearance** designation?

A. Victim In-depth Interview

	Yes	No	Unk/NA	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used trauma-informed* practices. (*See Case Review Guide, page #)
2.	If no or unknown re: trauma-informed practices:			
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the investigator ask questions that were focused on victim-blaming and/or reflecting more concern for the accused than the victim?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the investigator ask questions demonstrating disbelief or misunderstanding of victim behavior?
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report uses victim's words/language?
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report captures the full context of the crime in language of non-consensual sex?
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Context of force, threat, or fear victim experienced is well documented in interview, if applicable?
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete, thorough documentation of victim interview?
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If recantation occurred, what were the circumstances?
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was a recording of the victim's interview(s) provided for the review?
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the case strongly rely on information/evidence from the victim?



Victim In-Depth Interview Comments:

- #1.
- #2
- #3
- #4
- #5
- #6
- #7
- #8
- #9

Additional Observations re: Victim Interview

- Did the investigator use non-leading questions and other open-ended prompts?
 Yes No
- Did the investigator provide encouragement of narrative responses and active generation of information by the victim, not just passive responses to investigator questions?
 Yes No
- Did the investigator pause to allow the victim time to digest a question and think about how to respond, without being rushed or interrupted?
 Yes No
- Did the investigator focus on what the victim could recall thinking and feeling throughout the experience?
 Yes No
- Did the investigator provide consistent expressions of patience, empathy, and understanding?
 Yes No
- Did the investigator explain to the victim that there was no necessity for information to be provided in a sequential or “logical” order?
 Yes No
- Did the investigator instruct the victim not to guess at any answers, and to say “I don’t know” or “I don’t remember” when needed?
 Yes No



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the investigator not ask the victim “why” questions, but replaced and reframed questions to help understand the victim’s experiences and responses? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No • Did the investigator explain to the victim that they may recall additional information as time passes? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No • Did the investigator listen to the victim’s account without assumptions or bias? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No • Did the investigator ask if there was something else they did not ask that the victim would like to share? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

B. Suspect Interview

	Yes	No	Unk/NA	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Suspect interview attempted/accomplished (circle)?
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was a recording of the suspect’s interview(s) provided for the review?
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Report uses suspect’s language as appropriate?
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elements of ‘voluntariness’ of statement highlighted (or suspect Mirandized if in custody)?
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offender history collected/investigated as applicable?
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Suspect’s role in ‘setting up’ the assault (or creating the conditions of vulnerability) noted?
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Areas of corroboration of victims’ account highlighted; implausible/absurd statements highlighted?
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forensic/physical exam conducted as applicable?
Suspect Interview Comments:				
#1.				



#2
#3
#4
#5
#6
#7
#8

Additional Observations re: Suspect Interview

- Suspect’s level of intoxication probed (if any)?
 Yes No
- Did the investigator ask if there was anything else they did not ask that the Suspect would like to share?
 Yes No
- Other observations?
Click or tap here to enter text.

C. Evidence Collection/Witness Identification

	Yes	No	Unk/NA	
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information necessary to prove elements of the crime included/noted?
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Witnesses identified and interviewed (witnesses at scene, witnesses who know suspect, initial disclosure witnesses, etc.)?
11.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interviews recorded?
12.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Comprehensive evidence collection (e.g., photographs, physical/forensic evidence from suspect, clothes, pre-text calls)?
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In-person or photo lineup used, if appropriate
Evidence Collection Comments:				
#9				
#10				
#11				



#12
#13

Additional Observations

Click or tap here to enter text.

D. Prosecution Overall Questions

	Yes	No	Unk/NA	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the case properly coded as a crime and as the correct crime?
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If the investigation supported an arrest, was it made?
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If the case was unfounded* , explain the circumstances. (*See Case Review Guide, page #)
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the investigation demonstrate that no crime had occurred?
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did a supervisor review and approve each decision to unfound a case?
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If a case was exceptionally cleared was the exceptional clearance* proper? Describe. (*See Case Review Guide, page #)
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the case forwarded to the prosecutor after a full investigation and the proper collection and testing of evidence?
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If appropriate, was additional follow-up investigation conducted after referring to the prosecutor?
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If appropriate, was the victim contacted by the police after referral to the prosecutor? (to see if new memories, etc.)
Prosecution Overall Comments				
#1.				
#2				



#3
#4
#5
#6
#7
#8
#9

Additional Observations

Click or tap here to enter text.

ATTACHMENT 6



Sexual Assault Investigations Program

Team Findings Form

Case ID Number:	Reviewer(s):
Investigator:	
Department:	Case Open Date:
Attended SAI-VCERT: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Case Closed Date:
Advocate Name:	Advocate Org:
Others Involved (name/org):	

SAI-VCERT Learning Objectives

- a. Understand and recognize the nature and consequences of victimization.
- b. Understand and describe how specific experiences impact victim trauma, memory, reactions, and behavior.
- c. Understand how investigator interpretation of victim behaviors impact sexual assault cases.
- d. Identify strategies to work with all victims to facilitate trust and communication.
- e. Conduct interviews utilizing a research-based model that integrates wellness skills designed to minimize victim trauma, provide maximum emotional comfort, reduce the number of interviews, and foster resilience.
- f. Conduct objective, thorough, and complete investigations that articulate elements of the identified crime, while utilizing physical, psychological, and sensory evidence to build a strong case.
- g. Understand the importance of working with a multi-disciplinary team.

Questions

	Yes	No	Unk	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the investigator attend SAI-VCERT?
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the SAI-VCERT training overlap with the investigation?
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Were the interactions with the victim consistent with training objectives?
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Was the case conducted with training objectives?
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Were there takeaways from the case (either best practices or gaps) that should be included in the training?
6.	List any questions for advocate(s).			

CJTC 2023

This checklist was derived from SVJIMNCASA SART Case File Review Guidebook and the Women's Law project, Policy Brief, Feb. 2013.

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7.	List any questions for prosecutor(s).
8.	List any questions for investigator(s).

Notes and Observations

ATTACHMENT 7

SAI-VCERT Class, Arlington

Please answer all of the questions below with the caveat, "Since the SAI-VCERT training"

1. Enter your name, title/role, and agency

Name

Title/Role

Agency

2. I have an increased understanding of and interest in the impacts of trauma on sexual assault victims.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. I have relied on my understanding of trauma during interactions and interviews of sexual assault victims.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I have reflected my understanding of sexual assault victim trauma in case documentation.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

Strongly disagree

5. List or describe the common trauma responses you have observed when responding to sexual assault victims.

6. Select all reasons why resiliency skills are useful in working with victims of trauma.

- Helps to regulate their nervous system
- Supports building rapport
- Helps obtain more information during interviews
- Allows you to take ALL control of the victim interview process

7. I have used the wellness/resiliency skills taught in the class (tracking, grounding, resourcing, or reset now) with the sexual assault victim being interviewed.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. I have used the wellness/resiliency skills taught in the class (tracking, grounding, resourcing, or reset now) to build on my own well-being and/or resiliency.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. Please describe one wellness/resiliency skill (tracking, grounding, resourcing, or reset now) you have used recently with a victim or suspect that has worked well.

10. What are reasons you have NOT employed a wellness/resiliency skill?

- N/A, I have relied on these skills
- I have discomfort with them
- Not suitable for victim/situation
- Need more training with them
- Other (please specify)

11. I have devoted more time and attention to rapport building during the interview process.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. Select and/or describe the changes you've noticed in the interviews with victims following rapport building:

- Ability to identify personal resource(s) or support
- More detailed responses
- Ability to complete the interview
- I do not spend time on rapport building during an interview
- Other (please specify)

13. There are certain topics or questions I rely on that are typically helpful in building rapport.

- Yes
- No

Please explain your answer

14. Has rapport building been challenging when engaging with a victim?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe

15. I am regularly incorporating open-ended questions in my interviews with victims.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. I am regularly including sensory-based questions in my interviews with victims.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17. I am regularly incorporating open-ended questions in my interviews with suspects and victims of other crimes.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. Since the training, my utilization of community-based sexual assault advocates has:

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the same
- I do not rely on advocates in these cases

19. I am offering community and system advocates as a support to the victim:

- Immediately upon initial contact
- Within 2-3 days after contact
- Once forwarded to prosecution
- I do not rely on advocates in these cases

20. Describe the typical process for connecting a victim to an advocate. Or, if you responded that you do not rely on advocates, please explain why they are not utilized.

21. Provide any recommendations you have for improving the collaborations between sexual assault advocacy and law enforcement investigations, please describe.

22. What are some potential barriers victims have when reporting a sexual assault?

- Fear of retaliation
- Shame
- Concerned they will not be believed and/or for the assault
- Not wanting the person who harmed them to get in trouble
- Adverse prior experience making a report or interacting with systems

23. What are examples of ways in which offenders select and groom their victims?

- Manipulation
- Isolation
- Gift Giving
- Boundary Invasion
- Befriending

24. What are the types or categories of evidence you are collecting in sexual assault cases?

- Clothing
- Digital Evidence
- Outcry Witness Statement
- Blood
- Urine
- Other (please specify)

25. The training improved or enhanced my response to crime victims and witnesses beyond sexual assault crimes.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain

26. The definition of sexual intercourse includes (select all that apply):

- Touching of the inner labia with fingers
- Penile vaginal penetration
- A sex toy inserted in the anus
- Oral sex

27. Mental incapacity and physical helplessness are two different things. Describe the differences, and what evidence you would look for to substantiate the difference.

28. Why is it important to document your observations and not your opinion?

29. What constitutes consent in sexual assault cases?

30. In what circumstances should you collect blood and/or urine? Why would you collect it?

31. Since the training, I feel better equipped during my interactions with sexual assault victims.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please explain

32. The training has increased my understanding of what should be collected as evidence for sexual assault cases.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

33. What, if anything, was missing from the VCERT course now that you have brought the content back into

the field?

34. What additional training(s) would be useful to you in your work on sexual assault investigations?

- Sexual Assault Kit (SAK) process
- Evidence collection and investigative techniques
- Courtroom testimony
- Report Writing
- Mitigating stress/Resiliency strategies for law enforcement
- Impacts of trauma
- Other (please specify)

35. Any additional feedback or suggestions you have regarding the SAI-VCERT course and your work in sexual assault investigations?

Done



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ATTACHMENT 8



Uncheck
**SCREEN
READER MODE**
to get back to
One Question at
a Time Mode.

Prosecutor Survey 2023

1. Name and Organization

2. What do you perceive as barriers/conditions impacting cases which are submitted for charging by an investigative agency, but not prosecuted?

3. Our training emphasizes a trauma informed, victim-centered approach to sexual assault investigation. Towards that end, we are interested in learning about strategies you recommend for reducing the number times a victim is interviewed. Please share:

4. Regarding responding to sexual violence, what training topics and or areas of emphasis within topics

would you recommend for patrol officers?

5. Regarding responding to sexual violence, what training topics and or areas of emphasis within topics would you recommend for detectives/investigators?

6. What are examples of best practices you've observed/experienced regarding law enforcement response to sexual assault in your county?

7. What strategies do you implement for identifying and addressing victim disengagement and case attrition factors?

DONE

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ATTACHMENT 9

CSTR Advocate Survey 2023

1. Name and Organization (Company)

2. What are the most common barriers you perceive for victims to report sexual assaults to police departments in Snohomish County?

3. What training topics and/or emphasis within topics would you recommend for patrol officers?

4. What training topics and/or emphasis within topics would you recommend for detectives/investigators?

5. What would you consider to be examples the best practices you've observed/experienced with regards to law enforcement responses to sexual assaults in your County?

DONE

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