



Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations

Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations is a free training provided by the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) team at the Virginia Office of the Attorney General. This training is based on the curriculum developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and is approved by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for Partial In-service Credits (PIC) hours for law enforcement. The class is also approved by the Virginia Bar Association for Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits for attorneys.

The Virginia SAKI team facilitates this training for law enforcement, Commonwealth's attorneys, victim advocates, forensic nurses, social workers, Title IX, dispatchers, emergency services, and other allied professionals. This training is customizable from a partial four-hour session, a partial one-day session, or the full two-day course. The SAKI team can travel throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia to train your agency or jurisdiction.

The *Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations* training promotes best practices for responding to and investigating crimes of trauma, primarily sexual assault. The training centers on trauma-informed, victim-centered, and offender-focused multidisciplinary response, and employs nationally recognized and research-supported methods.

Trainees will have a better understanding of how trauma impacts victim behavior and memory, and the implications for investigations, how to utilize trauma-informed interview techniques and offender-focused investigative strategies, and how offenders target their victims and exploit victim vulnerabilities or create them using a variety of techniques. This knowledge will enable trainees to better support victims and hold offenders accountable. Other crucial aspects covered are the Physical Evidence Recovery Kit (PERK) tracking system and the Violent Crime Apprehension Program (ViCAP).

If you are interested in hosting or attending a training in your area, please contact saki@oag.state.va.us.



Curriculum: Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Investigations

Module 1– Overcoming the Complexities of Sexual Violence: Understanding the Realities

(1.5 hours of instruction)

- Address common misperceptions and provide facts and realities regarding sexual violence and how these may affect the investigation.
- Discuss possible reasons for victims not reporting or delayed reporting.

Module 2– How Does Culture Influence the Communities We Serve?

(1 hour of instruction)

- Discuss how culture contributes to ideas about gender roles and myths and misperceptions around sexual violence.
- Explore the impacts of culture on victims, offenders, and the overall criminal justice response.

Module 3– Review of PERK Legislation and the PERK Tracking System

(45 minutes of instruction)

- Review the current requirements under the PERK Act- [Chapter 1.2 of Title 19.2](#) and how these relate to victims and the entire criminal justice response to sexual violence.

Module 4– The Impact of Trauma: A Trauma-Informed Lens and Response

(2 hours of instruction)

- Focus on how trauma impacts memory, reactions, and behavior.
- Understand the implications of trauma for first responders' and investigators' interviews and investigations.

Module 5– Trauma-Informed First Response: First Impression Matters

(1 hour of instruction)

- Learn techniques to build rapport with victims when first contact is made.
- Re-frame interview questions to provide a trauma-informed approach.
- Examine why some victims disengage from the investigation and discuss ways to limit this.

Module 6– Trauma-Informed Victim Interview

(2 hours of instruction)

- Discuss the impacts of trauma on the interview and investigative processes.
- Learn techniques to reduce these impacts to improve support and trust building.

Module 7– Perpetrator Realities and Investigative Strategies

(1.5 hours of instruction)

- Explore the realities of perpetrator behavior and investigative strategies.
- Discuss and examine real-life examples of sex offenders and their attempts to manipulate and influence investigations.

Module 8- Drug and Alcohol-Facilitated Sexual Assault

(1 hour of instruction)

- Discuss the characteristics and complexities of alcohol and drug-facilitated sexual assault.
- Learn strategies for investigating these types of cases.