

Protecting Communities and Supporting Victims Necessity For Trauma-Informed Training

Prepared for the Law & Justice Interim Committee Re: HJR 32

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January 14, 2026

RAINN

About **RAINN**

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country and operates the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN's mission is to stop sexual violence by supporting survivors, holding perpetrators accountable, and creating safer communities.

National Sexual Assault Hotline:
800.656.HOPE, online.rainn.org y rainn.org/es



Yes, I reported, immediately. ...they assigned ... someone completely unequipped to handle a child reporting sexual abuse. He wasn't empathetic. He wasn't trauma-informed. He didn't speak to me like I was a scared, hurting 14-year-old. He treated it like routine paperwork, like I was just another task on his shift. There was no warmth. No sensitivity. No acknowledgment of the courage it took for me to be there.

...And that moment, being brave enough to speak up, only to be met with coldness and detachment, left a deeper scar than I realized at the time....

- Caitlin

Sandi Johnson

*Senior Legislative
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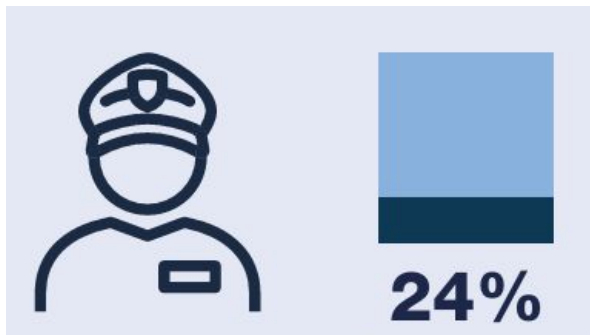
- 20+ Years Prosecutor
 - Homicides
 - Organized Gang Prosecution
 - Special Victims Unit
- Trainer/Presenter
- RAINN since 2023

Cases Without Specialized Training

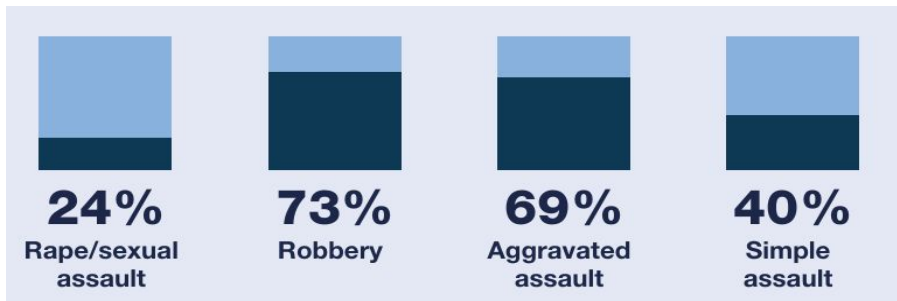
- Victim Reported Sexual Assault
- Detective Interviewed Victim and Defendant
- Sexual Assault Kit Not Tested
- Case Closed Because Detective Stated Victim's Behavior "Not Typical"

The Problem

- Victims of Sexual Assault Are Not Reporting
- Violent Crimes Are Not Being Solved
- Perpetrators Are Not Brought to Justice



Nationally, only 24% of Rape/Sexual Assault Victims Reported To Police



Lowest Reporting For Violent Crimes

The Problem

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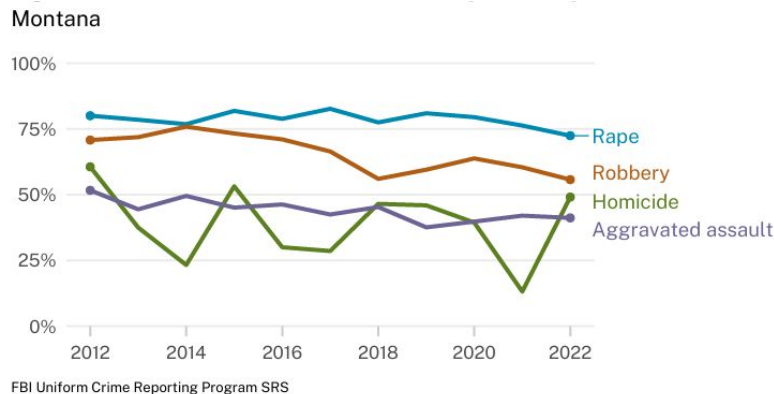
Why Don't Victims Report?

- Victims do not think they will be believed
- 13% of victims believed the police would not do anything to help
- 2% believed the police could not do anything to help

The Problem

- Victims of Sexual Assault Are Not Reporting
- Violent Crimes Are Not Being Solved
- Perpetrators Are Not Brought to Justice

Nationally 75% of Sexual Assault cases closed at Investigation Stage



In 2013, the FBI updated its rape definition to be more inclusive, so comparisons before and after should be interpreted with

Similar percentages in Montana – 79%

- 3,463 Reported Rapes
- 177 Reported Homicides

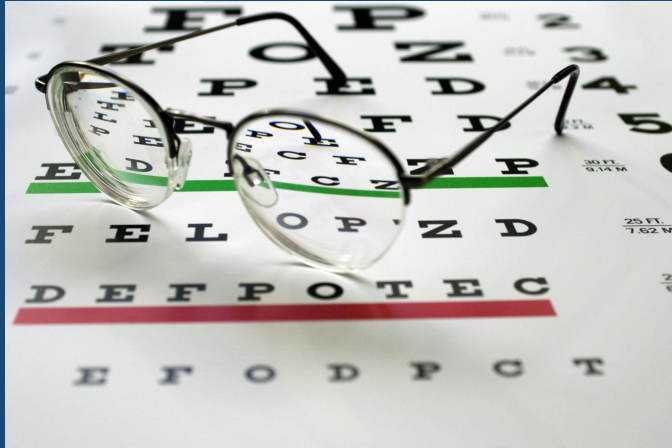
FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Data 2020-2025

The Problem

- Victims of Sexual Assault Are Not Reporting
- Violent Crimes Are Not Being Solved
- Perpetrators Are Not Brought to Justice

- One-Third of offenders in CODIS had two or more sexual assaults linked
- Sexual assault offenders are frequently linked to other types of crimes, in particular, violent crimes
- Only 0.4 to 5.4 percent of sexual assaults committed will be prosecuted

Trauma-Informed Training



- Humans determine whether something “makes sense” based on what they believe is “normal” about the situation
- To make accurate investigative decisions, officers need to understand the realities of sexual assault

What Is Trauma-Informed Training?*

- Neurobiology of Trauma
- Realities of Sexual Assault
- Investigation Techniques
- Supportive Interactions

*A very, very brief overview

Neurobiology of Trauma

Memory

- Some facts not recorded or recorded out of order

Triggers self-protection habits

- Not rational responses

Psychological protections

- Return to routine or habit
- Minimization



Trauma-Informed Investigations

- Neurobiology of Trauma
- Realities of Sexual Assault
- Investigation Techniques
- Supportive Interactions

Facts About Sexual Assault



- 5% Committed By Stranger
- 65% Committed In a Residence/Home
- <1% Reported Rapes Committed Using a Knife or Firearm
- 50% of victims older than 19
- False Reports Are Rare

Trauma-Informed Investigations

- Neurobiology of Trauma
- Realities of Sexual Assault
- Investigation Techniques
- Supportive Interactions

Interviewing Victims of Trauma

- Ask questions designed to elicit the most information



Trauma-Informed Investigations

- Neurobiology of Trauma
- Realities of Sexual Assault
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Avoid Further Harm

Trauma-Informed practices are “less likely to add trauma to someone who may already have experienced it”

~Elizabeth Wexler, LCSW

- Keeps Victims Engaged
- Increases trust with community



I couldn't be more grateful for the understanding, support, and kindness given to me by the police and SVU detectives during this time. I wouldn't have been able to get through this process if it weren't for them. They worked so hard to provide me the justice I needed at the time, and that's exactly what they did....

– Kylie

Trauma-Informed Training Works

- Improves Investigations
 - Supports Victims
 - Communities Are Safer
- Officers feel better prepared to investigate sexual assault cases
 - Increases cases investigated
 - Victims are more likely to remain engaged and participate (32%)
 - Builds cooperation and trust with victims, witnesses, family members, and the community
 - More successful prosecution of violent offenders (6% to 22%)



... I had to go through an additional two recollections of the incident in excruciating detail to the detectives assigned to my case. Luckily, they were extremely kind and supportive ... I felt safe and comfortable enough to open up and share my story in full, which helped move things along.

They began their investigation, and once enough evidence was collected, it ran through the court system.

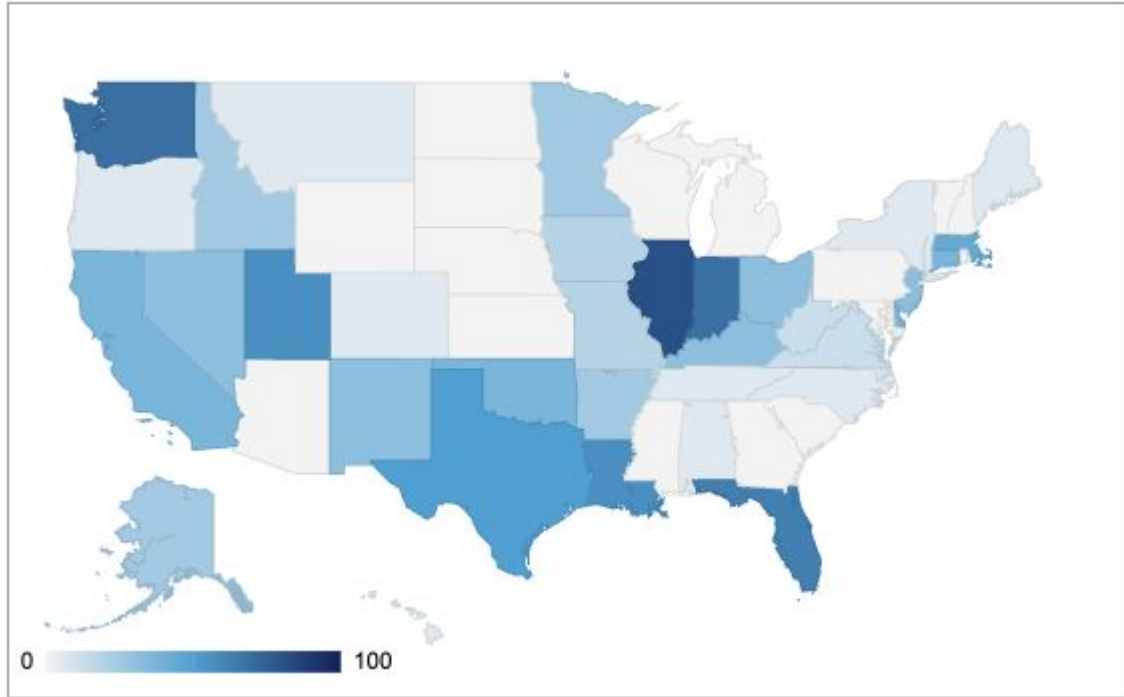
– Kylie

Implementing Evidence Based Practices

9

States requiring
additional and specific
training for investigators
of sexual violence

Trauma Informed Map



23 States Require Trauma-Informed or
Sexual Violence Training for Officers

Trauma-Informed Training Works

- Improves Investigations
- Supports Victims
- Communities Are Safer

Case After Training

- Victim behavior actually “typical”
- Sexual Assault Kit Submitted
- Victims re-interviewed
- Thorough Investigation
- Defendant convicted at trial

Trauma-Informed Training Recommendations

- Understand neurobiology of trauma
- Address unfounded stereotypes so decisions are reality-based
- All law enforcement officers need to be trauma-informed prior to starting and throughout their careers
- Investigators should receive additional training
- Practice trauma-informed victim interviewing
- Develop training in consultation with law enforcement, sexual assault service providers or coalitions, and experts

Thank you.

RAINN

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