Victim Notification

The Houston Sexual Assault Kit
Action Research Project

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What are victims’ recommendations on when/how to notify about re-opening case or testing previously collected evidence?

What are victim advocates’ recommendations regarding notification and follow-up services?

How to create multidisciplinary collaboration to create victim-centered notification model?
Victim and Professional Interviews

- Opportunity for *choice* and *control*
- Notification should be *flexible, thoughtful*
- Have the *right to know*
- Unintended consequences
- Advocacy is critical

**Focus on victim-centered re-engagement**
Victim Notification Strategies

- Complainant Notification Protocol
- Justice Advocate
- Sexual Assault Information Line (SAIL)
- Houston Area Women’s Center Victim Liaison
- CODIS Squad
Complainant Notification Protocol

 Victim Notification Protocol

• Outlines step-by-step notification procedures

• Victim-centered approach

• Collaboratively designed by multidisciplinary group
Position Development

- Backlog and current cases
- Responds to needs of survivors
- Consults with investigators
- Fosters relationships with community agencies
How did the Justice Advocate impact investigations?
Ability to establish rapport with victims more easily

Improved language, more sensitive, more check-ins

Ability to conduct more thorough investigative interviews

Enhanced understanding of victims’ reactions

Feeling of providing good service to victims when they utilize JA
Connection as Community Liaison

Improved Relationship between Community & HPD

Increased SAK Project Progress
Victim Notification

Sexual Assault Information Line (SAIL)

- Developed to empower survivors by providing choice in notification process
  - Operates Mon-Fri (8am-4pm)
  - Information collected from caller
  - Provided basic information and referrals
  - Connected to an investigator

- Status:
  - Spreading the word
  - More Justice Advocate positions

(713) 308-1400
SAinfo@houstonpolice.org
Victim Notification Experiences

• Satisfaction with contact, although retriggering
• Appreciation for sensitive case response
• Kindness, empathy, support of investigators and Justice Advocate
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