FIRST RESPONDER'S GUIDE

ADULT SEXUAL ASSAULT

- **SECURE THE CRIME SCENE**

- **IDENTIFY THE SURVIVOR AND ANY SUSPECTS**

  Evaluate immediate survivor needs and remove them from the crime scene.

- **TAKE THE SURVIVOR'S STATEMENT**

  Listen to the survivor. Do not interrupt them. Do not require or suggest they complete a written statement. *Avoid asking "why" questions, as they may be interpreted as blaming.*

- **EXPLAIN TO THE SURVIVOR ABOUT**
  - Advocacy and Service Providers
  - Crime Victim's Rights resources
  - Pseudonym Forms and Protective Orders for Sexual Assaults
  - The Follow-Up Process

- **NOTIFY CHAIN-OF-COMMAND AND INVESTIGATIVE ELEMENTS**

- **ARRANGE FOR A SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAM (SAFE)**

  Consider detention of the suspect(s) to preserve evidence when warranted.

- **ENSURE THE SURVIVOR'S AND WITNESSES' SAFETY BEFORE LEAVING THE SCENE**

Trauma-Sensitive Response

The first interactions between you and a survivor will heavily influence all future interactions—**building rapport and trust is key** to keeping the survivor engaged with the criminal justice system and the judicial process. Recognize how your response and approach, both verbal and non-verbal, may affect a survivor's ability to recover from the trauma.

Additionally, minimizing the number of officers the survivor is asked to interact with will help strengthen the rapport and relationship between you and the survivor.

It is important to understand the trauma the survivor will be experiencing and to be mindful of how trauma affects the brain's ability to record and store memories while recounting the details of the assault—**a survivor may not be able to recollect details in chronological order**. This may seem counterintuitive and confusing to both you and the survivor, but it is actually quite common for trauma to present this way.