

Introduction



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THE GLOBAL CRIMES OF DOMESTIC AND DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, RAPE, STALKING, AND STRANGULATION ARE BEING PERPETRATED AT STAGGERING RATES. I UNDERSTAND THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS THESE CRIMES HAVE ON THE VICTIM AND THE IMPACTS ON FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. RECENT RESEARCH HAS PROVIDED US WITH A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE REALITIES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND INTIMATE PARTNER CRIMES. WITH THIS INFORMATION, LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES MUST CONTINUE TO CREATE AND UPDATE COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES, IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE PROCEDURES, AND DEVELOP COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH VARIOUS COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO ADDRESS THESE CRIMES.

Sexual and gender-based violence and intimate partner crimes are significant and horrible crimes that need to be identified and addressed with expediency. We must ensure that the officers who respond to these crimes are trauma-informed and victim-centered in their approach. This can only be achieved through continuous training and the implementation of global best practices.

To this end, the IACP has been engaged in work to create comprehensive tools and provide support to law enforcement agencies aimed to strengthen response to these crimes and serve the victims of these crimes. Through various partnerships, we have presented effective, comprehensive training content and provided direction and support on developing policies and multidisciplinary response teams.

As a law enforcement professional who has worked in this field, served as a member of the working group of the New Jersey Governor's Advisory Council Against Sexual Violence, and conducted training

for organizations and state coalitions against sexual assault (CASA), I recognize the need for law enforcement to engage in and take the lead on collaborative partnerships and implement promising practices and strategies to address these complex crimes. Recent data show that calls for domestic disputes or intra-family offenses continue to be the most dangerous type of call for the responding officers. We must never underestimate the gravity of these crimes. The same individuals who are perpetrating these acts are killing our fellow officers.

Effective investigations can make a significant impact on the safety of both the victims and the entire community by sending a strong message that these crimes will not be tolerated. The IACP has developed numerous resources and tools and has ongoing comprehensive training and technical assistance programs that focus on building the capacity of law enforcement to respond to sexual and gender-based crimes. Guidelines and resources are available to assist agencies as they work to strengthen their responses to sexual and gender-based violence and intimate partner crimes, assess current practices, and develop policies. Tools and training curricula have been created to support supervisors as they mentor frontline officers, and training videos have been developed that present the complexities of these crimes in a concise yet comprehensive manner, making them appropriate for use in roll call or in-service training and with community partners.

Too often, these crimes go unreported or disbelieved. I am excited to have the first IACP/*Police Chief* special feature to serve as a voice for the voiceless victim. Only when we believe, empower, and support can victims and survivors be truly served. Stay safe. ♥