

Joanne Archambault
Training Director
SATI, Inc.
Joanne@mysati.com
www.mysati.com

Effective Report Writing

Even when properly investigated, the majority of reported sexual assaults are not successfully prosecuted. Prosecutors often argue that police reports are severely lacking while law enforcement argues that prosecuting attorneys want a sure win. No matter how good an investigation is -- the prosecuting attorney may not feel confident filing criminal charges if the reports are incomplete or inaccurate. Or if the prosecutor files charges, the defendant may be acquitted if the reports summarizing the investigation are poorly written.

Sexual assault is an uncomfortable subject for most of American society. Few police officers and deputies have been taught how to properly document these crimes. Because of the pervasiveness of the shame attached to sexual assault, some officers, supervisors and prosecutors feel a need to sanitize or alter a victim's statement.

Defense attorneys often win cases because they attack the credibility of the investigation and the perception of the victim's credibility, often with ammunition that comes from the investigators' own reports.

A good report is more than an accurate summary of the facts. A good report anticipates potential defense strategies and provides the information necessary to counter them.

At the conclusion of the session, participants will be able to:

- Improve your reporting writing skills
- Successfully document suspect, witness and victim interviews
- Anticipate potential defense strategies and provide written information to counter them
- Have a better understanding of how to recreate and document a victim's reality of a sexual assault
- Evaluate common sexual assault scenarios and the way they are often inappropriately interpreted and documented
- Identify the difference between the language of consensual versus non-consensual sex
- Understand the significance of the vocabulary we use, i.e., Sexual assault victims don't "perform oral sex" and other sexual acts of violence, 12-year-old victims don't "have sex" with adult men. Sex offenders molest, exploit and sexually assault children and adolescents.