

Council Communication

November 4, 2014, Business Meeting

Approval of an MOU between the City of Brighton Police Department and the Ashland Police Department to join the *You Have Options* national program.

FROM:

Corey Falls, Deputy Chief, corey.falls@ashland.or.us

SUMMARY

The City of Ashland Police Department is coming before the Council for approval of an MOU between the City of Brighton Police Department and the Ashland Police Department to join the You Have Options national program.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The Ashland Police Department has started a national program for sexual assault reporting called You Have Options. This program is led by law enforcement professionals working in partnership with advocacy and experts in the field of sexual assault response and prevention, to make the law enforcement response to sexual assault more effective. Agencies participating in the You Have Options Program will receive training in law enforcement options for sexual assault reporting and best practice law enforcement strategies to assist in the identification and investigation of sexual offenders. The City of Brighton Police Department is the first police department to join this program.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no fiscal implications for the MOU.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUESTED ACTION:

Staff recommends that Council accept the MOU between the City of Brighton Police Department and the Ashland Police Department.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

Move to approve the MOU between the City of Brighton Police Department and the Ashland Police Department.

ATTACHMENTS:

Copy of the You Have Options MOU.





Memorandum of Understanding

Between the **YOU HAVE OPTIONS** Program
and
(Name of Participating Law Enforcement Agency)

NUMBER: YHOP-14-XXX

This Memorandum of Understanding, while not legally binding, documents a voluntary agreement to join the national implementation of the You Have Options Program. Led by law enforcement professionals working in partnership with advocacy and experts in the field of sexual assault response and prevention, the aim of the Program is to make the law enforcement response to sexual assault more effective.

PURPOSE

Agencies participating in the You Have Options Program will receive training in law enforcement options for sexual assault reporting and best practice law enforcement strategies to assist in the identification and investigation of sexual offenders.

The You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) recognize the need for a victim-centered and offender-focused response to sexual violence. The traditional law enforcement response to sexual violence tends to discourage sexual assault victims from seeking assistance through the criminal justice system. As a result, often doesn't receive the information necessary to hold sexual offenders accountable, and those offenders go on to victimize additional persons.

The You Have Options Program focuses on changing two fundamental elements in the law enforcement response to sexual violence: Increasing the number of victims who report to law enforcement, and thoroughly investigating identified offenders for serial perpetration.

A small percentage of the population commits a large number of sexual assault offenses. Utilizing the victim-centered and offender-focused strategies of the You Have Options Program allows law enforcement to work collaboratively and gather the information necessary to identify and successfully investigate serial sexual predators.

GOALS OF THE YOU HAVE OPTIONS PROGRAM

1. Increase sexual assault reporting by eliminating as many barriers to reporting as possible.
2. Increase identification and prosecution of sexual offenders.
3. Decrease sexual assault victimization.

COLLABORATION

The You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) mutually agree that sharing best practice techniques, strategies and methods in the field of sexual assault reporting and investigation increases the effectiveness of the law enforcement response to sexual violence. This collaborative approach ensures the sharing of knowledge and resources while reducing the duplication of efforts. To aid in this objective the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) will have unrestricted access to the law enforcement portal on the You Have Options Program national website www.ReportingOptions.org for the length of time this Memorandum of Understanding remains in effect.

Collaboration between law enforcement and those that are victimized must also occur, both during the reporting process and any subsequent investigation. The You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) agree that reasonable efforts will be made to address barriers victims face when reporting a sexual assault to law enforcement and when working with law enforcement during an investigation. The You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) understand a sexual assault victim's wants and needs may at times be in conflict with the criminal justice process and agree to place the victim's preference first when legally possible to do so.

FUNDING

At every available opportunity the You Have Options Program will provide training, curriculum and other program materials at low or no cost to all You Have Options Participating Law Enforcement Agencies. The You Have Options Program is designed to have as little impact as possible on the budgets of those who implement the You Have Options Program.

The (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) commits to fund the following items associated with implementation of the You Have Options Program:

- Designation, training and staff time for a You Have Options Program Administrator(s)
- Designation, training and staff time for a You Have Options Trainer(s)
- Training of department personnel

- Online report form submissions
- Software for You Have Options Database (database provided)
- Minor fees associated with national website hosting and maintenance

GENERAL

This Memorandum of Understanding does not create additional jurisdiction or limit or modify existing jurisdiction vested in the parties. This Memorandum of Understanding is intended exclusively to provide guidance for implementation of the You Have Options Program within the (Participating Law enforcement Agency). Nothing contained herein creates or extends any right, privilege, or benefit to any person or entity other than outlined above. Each party may disclose publicly the terms of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Appendices 1 through 4, attached to this Memorandum of Understanding, are incorporated herein and deemed to be a material part of the Memorandum of Understanding. It is the understanding of both the You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) that all agencies participating in the You Have Options Program shall abide by:

Appendix 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A YOU HAVE OPTIONS PROGRAM LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

Appendix 2: PARTICIPATING AGENCY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Appendix 3: PARTICIPATING AGENCY PROGRAM TRAINER

Participating Law Enforcement Agencies shall adopt a written directive policies and procedures for their personnel in accordance with the Roles and Responsibilities of a You Have Options Program Law Enforcement Agency as defined in Appendix 1.

TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding may be modified by written consent of authorized officials from the You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency).

This Memorandum of Understanding shall become effective upon signature by an authorized official from the You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by an authorized official from the You Have Options Program or the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency). This agreement can be severed at any time and for any reason by either the You Have Options Program or the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency).

CONTACT INFORMATION

The You Have Options Program
Program Manager: Carrie Hull
1155 E. Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520
541-552-2126
541-552-2179 (fax)
carrie.hull@ashland.or.us

(Participating Law Enforcement Agency)
Address
Phone
E-mail

AUTHORIZED SIGNATORIES

Execution of this MOU confirms that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated in the MOU.

You Have Options Program:

Chief Terry Holderness, Ashland Police Department

Date

Participating Law Enforcement Agency:

Date

This project was supported by grant VAWA-C-2013-JacksonCo.SART-00045 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, US Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the state or the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

APPENDIX 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A YOU HAVE OPTIONS PROGRAM LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

The You Have Options Program and the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) believe in providing victims of sexual assault with as much control over their report and any subsequent criminal investigation as the law allows. Unless legally mandated (e.g., certain instances of domestic violence; when the victim is under 18; when a victim is in continuing physical danger) or in other rare circumstances such as a significant threat to public safety, the following **20 Elements of a Victim-Centered and Offender-Focused You Have Options Law Enforcement Response**, at a minimum, shall be offered during every sexual assault report and/or investigation:

- 1. A victim of sexual assault is offered three options for reporting: Information Only, Partial Investigation or Complete Investigation.**
 - a. An Information Only Report includes any report of sexual assault where, at the reporting party's request, no investigative process beyond a victim interview and/or a complete or partial Inquiry into Serial Sexual Assault (ISSA) is completed.
 - b. A Partial Investigation includes any report of sexual assault where some investigative processes beyond the victim interview and a complete or partial Inquiry into Serial Sexual Assault (ISSA), have been initiated by law enforcement. This may include, but is not limited to, interviewing of witnesses and collection of evidence such as a sexual assault forensic examination (SAFE) kit.
 - c. A Complete Investigation includes any report of sexual assault where all investigative procedures necessary to determine if probable cause exists for a criminal sexual assault offense have been initiated and completed.
 - d. A sexual assault victim may change from an Information Only report to a Partial or Complete Investigation at any time.
 - e. A sexual assault victim may initially request a Complete Investigation and change to a Partial Investigation at any time prior to the conclusion of all investigative processes.
 - f. It is the recommendation of the You Have Options Program to not list a person as a "suspect" unless all investigative processes have been completed (Complete Investigation), or in the case of a Partial Investigation the investigative processes completed have shown probable cause to believe the crime reported occurred. However, each individual agency may determine how it chooses to list a reported perpetrator in its report writing system (ie Person, Suspect, Involved). A reported perpetrator's known biographical information, such as a name and birth date, shall be included in the report to aid in identifying serial perpetration.
 - g. Victims of sexual assault are encouraged to report even if they never intend to pursue criminal charges against the person who assaulted them.

- 2. A victim or other reporting party may remain anonymous and still have the information they provide documented by a You Have Options Program Law Enforcement Agency.**
 - a. Sexual assault information received from any of the reporting options shall be documented in written form and retained in a way that best preserves a victim's options and supports retrieval at a later date to aid in identifying serial sexual perpetration. If legally permissible, no report of sexual assault shall be purged or deleted from a law enforcement agency's records system.
 - b. All information received on a reported sexual assault shall be documented regardless of the apparent credibility of the reporter or apparent veracity of the information being provided. Failure to document all available information inhibits the ability of investigators to identify serial sexual perpetration.
 - c. Investigating officers shall respect the decision of the reporter and not initiate in-person contact.
- 3. A victim or other reporting party may have questions answered regarding their options for reporting and/or a criminal investigation prior to providing any identifying or incident information to law enforcement.**
- 4. A clear explanation of the reporting process and/or investigative procedures will be provided by a law enforcement officer if requested by the victim.**
 - a. This is facilitated by the website www.ReportingOptions.org and additional victim information sheets provided by the You Have Options Program.
- 5. When making a report there is no requirement to meet in person with a law enforcement officer. For example, a victim or other reporting party may report using an online form or a victim may choose to have a sexual assault advocate report on their behalf.**
 - a. Victims who choose to report through a third-party, such as a sexual assault advocate, maintain their chosen level of confidentiality while still providing to law enforcement important information on serial sexual perpetration. With a victim's permission, law enforcement has the ability to contact the victim through the third-party.
- 6. Reasonable efforts will be made to allow the victim or other reporting party control over the location, time and date where their initial report is made to law enforcement.**
 - a. If accommodations are unable to be made as requested by a victim or reporting party, a clear explanation as to why shall be provided by the law enforcement officer.

- 7. A victim or other reporting party may provide as much, or as little, information as they choose with no time limitations or restrictions on when the information is given to law enforcement.**
 - a. Information obtained on an incident outside the current statute of limitations shall be documented to assist in identifying serial sexual perpetration and/or in other investigations.

- 8. Law enforcement officers will offer assistance in locating sexual assault advocacy services to every person reporting.**
 - a. The physical and mental health and welfare of every victim of sexual assault shall be the priority at all times.
 - b. Not all victims of sexual assault request or want the services of a sexual assault advocate, and care should be taken to respect each victim's individual decision.
 - c. Additional confidentiality and victim safety concerns should be considered when contacting sexual assault advocacy, particularly in rural communities and/or in communities where the victim may personally know the advocate.

- 9. A victim may be accompanied by a sexual assault advocate or other appropriate support person during all phases of the reporting process and criminal investigation.**
 - a. If necessary, a clear explanation will be provided to a victim if his/her selected support person is not appropriate, such as a person who was a witness to the assault.

- 10. A victim, or other reporting party, may end an interview with law enforcement at any time without having to provide a reason.**

- 11. After making a report, a victim or other reporting party will not be pressured to participate in a criminal investigation.**

- 12. Reasonable efforts will be made to meet the needs of the victim and address any barriers the victim faces in providing information to law enforcement during the reporting process.**
 - a. Each victim reporting a sexual assault will have unique needs and circumstances that influence the decision to report. Often law enforcement has means of addressing the reasons why a victim may be hesitant to report. Working in coordination with the sexual assault victim, and his/her advocate if applicable, to identify and address these barriers is a core component of the You Have Options Program.

- b. Understanding that each victim's individual situation is unique, investigating officers shall attempt to view the reporting process from the victim's perspective and not assume what barriers a victim faces when reporting sexual assault.
- c. Many barriers such as fear of reporting to a certain gender, lack of transportation to the interview location or hesitancy to enter a law enforcement facility may be readily remedied by law enforcement if known.
- d. By addressing the barriers victims face when reporting sexual assault, and thereby increasing the number of sexual assault reports, investigators receive information they would otherwise never have had access to.

13. Law enforcement officers will conduct victim interviews in a trauma-informed manner.

- a. Reasonable efforts shall be made to limit the number of times a victim is interviewed regarding the assault.
- b. The victim's safety, cognitive impairment and mental health shall be taken into consideration prior to any interview.
- c. Victim statements shall be documented in a manner best allowing for an accurate record of the victim's exact statements, not a synopsis of the interviewer's perception of what was said. Paraphrasing can impart a different meaning. It is strongly recommended that, with a victim's consent, all victim interviews be audio and/or video recorded. This method of documentation allows the written record to most accurately reflect the actual words spoken by a victim or reporting party, and removes the chance for inconsistencies between the victim's and interviewer's recall of the interview.

14. Reasonable efforts will be made to meet the needs of the victim and address any barriers the victim faces when participating in a sexual assault investigation.

- a. Each victim of sexual assault will have unique needs and circumstance that influence the decision whether to continue with a criminal investigation. Often law enforcement has means of addressing the reasons why a victim may be hesitant to pursue charges against the person who assaulted them. Working in coordination with the sexual assault victim to identify and address these barriers is a core component of the You Have Options Program.
- b. Understanding that each victim's individual situation is unique, investigating officers shall attempt to view the investigative process from the victim's perspective and not assume what barriers a victim faces when participating in a sexual assault investigation.

15. A victim's right to keep the assault confidential shall be respected when legally permissible. No person (outside of a law enforcement agency) shall be notified that the victim has reported without the victim's consent. This includes the interviewing of identified witnesses and perpetrators.

- a. Investigators shall make reasonable efforts to only initiate processes that will maintain the victim's requested level of confidentiality.
- b. Special attention shall be given to restrict information dissemination to any institution with Title IX mandated reporting requirements for sexual assault, unless the victim consents to the information dissemination after being informed of how the institution's Title IX policy may limit the victim's ability to remain confidential.

16. Investigators will utilize strategies to identify and document serial sexual perpetration, such as the Inquiry into Serial Sexual Assault (ISSA).

- a. Serial perpetration strategies include, but are not limited to: focusing on how a suspect made the victim vulnerable, accessible and appear to lack credibility and identifying those who can corroborate that behavior; identifying witnesses to the victim's and suspect's behavior prior to and after the assault; and identifying opportunities for corroborative intelligence that can reveal motive, premeditation and/or information that may lead an investigator to additional victims.
- b. If reasonably possible, investigative strategies conducted by the investigating officer shall be discussed with the victim prior to their execution.
- c. Investigators shall make reasonable efforts to only initiate processes that will maintain the victim's requested level of confidentiality.

17. Investigators will collaborate with victims during the investigative process and respect a victim's right to request certain investigative steps not be conducted. Criminal investigations will be conducted at a pace set by the victim, not the law enforcement officer.

- a. At a victim's request, reasonable efforts will be made to collect and store evidence regardless of the victim's decision on whether to proceed with charges or participate in a Complete Investigation.
- b. Investigating officers will keep victims of sexual assault informed regarding the status of the investigation.
- c. Victims will be informed that no case can proceed to arrest or referral to an office of prosecution until the investigative process is complete.

18. A victim may disengage from a criminal investigation at any time prior to an arrest being made or the case being referred to an office of prosecution. There is no requirement that an explanation be given by the victim to law enforcement.

19. If legally permissible and probable cause exists for a crime, no arrest or referral to an office of prosecution will occur without the consent of the victim. All You Have Options Law Enforcement Agencies respect the choice of every victim who reports a

sexual assault, and understand that justice is not the same for every person who is victimized.

- a. Investigating officers shall offer options and not advice or directives. For example, it is never appropriate for any officer to tell a victim that they should cooperate with an investigation in order to prevent the sexual offender from assaulting others. The responsibility to not harm is the offender's, not the victim's.

20. Criminal investigations that do not result in arrest or referral to an office of prosecution will be classified as “inactive”, or the individual agency’s equivalent, unless found baseless or false, allowing for the investigation to be re-opened in the future at a victim’s request and/or if additional information is discovered.

In addition to the **20 Elements of a Victim-Centered and Offender-Focused You Have Options Law Enforcement Response** all You Have Options Participating Law Enforcement Agencies commit to:

- Prioritize medical and advocacy resources for every victim who reports a sexual assault, regardless of their decision to prosecute the offender and/or choice to assist law enforcement with an investigation.
- Provide non victim-blaming education to community members within the agency’s jurisdiction on the importance of sexual assault reporting and the reality of sexual assault perpetration, to include education on why an increase in the number of sexual assault reports should be viewed as a reflection of a more accurate picture of victimization.
 - Focus shall be on how sexual offenders target victims who are vulnerable, accessible and appear to lack credibility because often such victims are unlikely to report to law enforcement, and if they do report they may not be believed. Identification and documentation of serial sexual offending is a way to combat this manipulation by the offender of both the victim and the traditional criminal justice system.
 - Caution shall be used when providing any community education regarding risk reduction strategies, to avoid shifting the focus from the offender’s responsibility to not commit a sexual assault. For example, risk reduction strategies should be framed by how the perpetrator targets victims (i.e. intoxicated and/or isolated persons) instead of how a victim’s behavior allowed an assault to occur (i.e. a victim consumed alcohol and therefore made herself/himself available to a perpetrator).

- Train and hold accountable every member of the participating agency, sworn and non-sworn, for the same victim-centered and offender focused response as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding.
 - Investigating officers are expected to view the sexual assault incident and any additional relating factors from the victim's perspective and circumstances instead of their own.
 - Investigating officers are expected to maintain a level of understanding in regards to: Collaboration with advocacy, barriers to reporting, using the language of non-consensual sex in reporting writing, increased barriers faced by marginalized populations, reasons victims provide false information, the reality of false reporting, trauma-informed victim interviewing, the impact of Title IX on victim confidentiality, investigative strategies, sexual assault dynamics and serial perpetration. The You Have Options Program will provide no-cost curriculums on these training areas and/or provide resource information for endorsed instructors and organizations that can offer advanced instruction on these areas to agency personnel.

- Promote an environment within their agency in which victims of sexual assault are not judged or blamed for their assault and instead are treated with dignity, sensitivity and courtesy.

- Not polygraph victims reporting a sexual assault. A polygraph examination of a victim shall not be requested, required, or conducted as a condition for proceeding with the investigation of the crime.

- Not arrest any person for filing a false report of sexual assault without evidence beyond a recantation to support the false report charge. Additionally, Participating Law Enforcement Agencies agree that if corroboration does exist, careful consideration will be given prior to initiating an arrest for false report. The Participating Agency understands that often evidence-supported false reports are the result of emotional problems and false report arrests deter other victims of sexual assault from reporting. Consideration of these factors should be made in cases where no reported perpetrator was named and/or impacted by the false report.

- Identifying alternative options other than an immediate arrest of a victim for criminal activity he/she engaged in related to the assault.

- Not require any victim of sexual assault to sign a waiver stating they do not want to participate in an investigation.

- Not list any victim who chooses to disengage from the reporting and/or investigative process as "uncooperative."

- Gather data on each report and/or investigation of sexual assault reported to the Participating Agency utilizing the database provided by the You Have Options Program, or an equivalent database already in use by the Participating Agency. Database requirements will be clearly outlined by the You Have Options Program.
- Provide four (4) quarterly reports of requested data to the You Have Options Program Manager from the database provided by the You Have Options Program. The You Have Options Program will not release any information from the data provided by the Participating Agency that will identify the Participating Agency in relation to the data without the express permission of the Participating Agency.
- Participate in a local Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) if available.
- Not modify, alter or change any print media created by the You Have Options Program without express permission from the You Have Options Program Manager or designee.
- Only identify their agency as a You Have Options Participating Law Enforcement Agency during the time period when a signed Memorandum of Understanding is in effect.
- All You Have Options Program Participating Agencies accept a responsibility to protect the use of the You Have Options Program name, logo, likeness or any other reference to the program and only use the You Have Options Program name, likeness and created materials in accordance with the victim-centered and offender-focused intent of the program as outlined in this Memorandum of Understanding. Use of any You Have Options Program generated content (ie law enforcement training videos, curriculum) is limited to law enforcement-led activities only unless made publicly available by the You Have Options Program or with the express permission of the You Have Options Program Manager.

Creative use of the You Have Options Program name, logo, website address, content and/or other likeness is encouraged by all You Have Options Program Law Enforcement Agencies. Caution shall be taken to not create any product that is victim-blaming in any way.

- Cease immediately the use or distribution of any created product or material containing the You Have Options Program name, logo, website address, content, likeness or any other reference to the program at the request of the You Have Options Program Manager or other designee.

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPATING AGENCY PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

The (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) agrees to designate at minimum one (1) employee of the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) to act as a Program Administrator for the You Have Options Program within the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency). To remain certified as a You Have Options Program Participating Agency the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) understands a minimum of one (1) Program Administrator shall be designated for their department at all times.

Effective implementation of this agreement can only be achieved through continuing communication and dialogue. It is the intent of the Memorandum of Understanding that the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency's) designated Program Administrator collaborates with the You Have Options Program Manager as necessary to facilitate effective implementation of the You Have Options Program within the participating agency.

The Program Administrator(s) shall:

- Be the main contact for the You Have Options Program Manager.
- Be the main contact for personnel of the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) in regards to the You Have Options Program implementation and participation.
- Oversee the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency)'s designated Trainer(s).
- Oversee any materials, curriculums or other media created by the Participating Law Enforcement Agency that use You Have Options Program content or program materials in any way are consistent with the intent of the You Have Options Program as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Oversee the collection and entry of data utilizing the You Have Options Program Data Collection Form for each report and/or investigation of sexual assault at the Participating Agency.
- Coordinate the delivery of four (4) quarterly reports of data from each report and/or investigation to the You Have Options Program Manager.
- Attend a minimum of one (1) You Have Options Program Introductory Session. No employee may be designated as a Program Administrator until this training has been completed.
- Maintain the continuity and intent of the You Have Options Program.

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPATING AGENCY PROGRAM TRAINER

The (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) agrees to designate at minimum one (1) sworn employee of the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) to act as a Program Trainer for the You Have Options Program within the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency). To remain certified as a You Have Options Program Participating Agency the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) understands a minimum of one (1) Program Trainer shall be designated

for its department at all times. The designated Program Trainer may also serve as the Program Administrator. The Program Trainer(s) shall:

- Provide training to all employees of the (Participating Law Enforcement Agency) on the You Have Options Program.
- Oversee non victim-blaming education to community members within the agency's jurisdiction.
- Maintain the continuity and intent of the You Have Options Program in all presentations, instruction and assistance provided to Participating Agency personnel and any other audience.
- Maintain the knowledge, skills and level of proficiency necessary to effectively educate Participating Agency personnel on the intent of the You Have Options Program.

Participating Agency Trainers may use You Have Options Program curriculums and provided training materials for trainings outside their jurisdiction. However, they shall not be designated as a You Have Options Program Trainer for a jurisdiction for which they are not employed.

APPENDIX 4: RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES

The following are recommended best practices, and while not required for program participation, should be carefully considered by all You Have Options Program Participating Agencies:

- **Working with Community-Based Advocacy**
While there is no requirement for You Have Options Participating Law Enforcement Agencies to coordinate their responses to sexual violence with advocacy agencies within their jurisdiction, doing so is strongly recommended. The availability of a community-based advocate who is not associated with the criminal justice process (i.e. advocates within an office of prosecution or law enforcement agency) for sexual assault victims cannot be overstated. Participating Agencies that work on strengthening their relationship with community-based advocacy, and other available advocacy resources, will benefit as victims often test the law enforcement reporting process by first seeking out information via advocacy. Advocates who are familiar with the You Have Options reporting and investigative process will be better equipped to provide accurate options to sexual assault victims. Training as a team of law enforcement and advocacy together is encouraged as a way to facilitate the building of this important professional relationship between law enforcement and advocacy.
- **Soft Interview Room**
Participating Agencies are encouraged to provide a room specifically designed to facilitate comfort during the victim interview and any additional investigative meetings.

Standard interview rooms may reinforce a victim's belief they are the one being investigated or that the interview is more of an interrogation. Participating Agencies are encouraged to provide photographs of their "soft" interview rooms for placement on the Participating Agencies page on www.ReportingOptions.org as an additional way to show victims the steps the Participating Agency is taking to facilitate their comfort during the reporting and investigative process.

- **Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI)**

Participating Agencies are encouraged to train their personnel in the Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview for use in victim interviewing. Developed by Russell Strand, a retired U.S. Army CID special agent and the current chief of the Family Advocacy Law Enforcement Training Division at the U.S. Army Military Police School, this interviewing technique reduces the inaccuracy of information obtained during the interview process and enhances the understanding of the victim's experience, taking into account how stress and trauma impact memory. The You Have Options Program will assist all Participating Agencies in locating opportunities for their personnel to receive training on this method of interviewing.

- **Retention of Sexual Assault Evidence**

Participating Agencies are encouraged to adopt a policy for collecting, processing and storing forensic sexual assault evidence that focuses on the retention of evidence to preserve victim and investigative options and assist in the identification of serial sexual offenders. The You Have Options Program will provide policy examples at the request of any Participating Agency.

- **Outside of Jurisdiction Reports**

Participating Agencies are strongly encouraged to never turn away a victim who initiates a sexual assault report when it is determined the incident they are reporting occurred in another jurisdiction. In these instances, best practice is to either initiate a "courtesy report" or directly assist the victim with their report to the jurisdiction of incident. Participating Agencies are expected to understand victims often do not understand law enforcement venue requirements and when told they need to report to another agency, may conclude instead that law enforcement does not want their information. Too often these victims never report to the agency they were referred to. By taking a "courtesy report" or assisting the victim with the report to the jurisdiction of incident, the law enforcement agency is affirming for the victim that his/her information is important; this may keep the victim engaged in the criminal justice process.

END OF DOCUMENT