



STRANGULATION INVESTIGATIONS

Part 3: Establishing & Understanding Intent

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing Part 3, officers will be able to:

- Understand why victims may not be able or willing to communicate effectively after a strangulation assault;
- Use trauma-informed techniques to help victims share details about the assault;
- Recognize common phrases, emotions, and expressions common in strangulation crimes; and
- Thoroughly document the perpetrator's intent and the victim's fear to aid prosecution.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

If you would like RESPOND Against Violence to facilitate an extended version of this discussion, email info@respondagainstviolence.org to set up a virtual meeting.

1. Why are victims more likely to cooperate with law enforcement investigations immediately after the asphyxiation, as compared to a week later?
2. What are some of the reasons a strangulation victim may not be able to communicate effectively when you arrive on-scene? What techniques, statements, or changes to your demeanor can you use to build rapport and elicit more information?
3. How common is it for prior violence to exist in a relationship where a strangulation occurs? Why is it important to understand the history of abuse?
4. What questions can you ask to establish the intent behind an act of strangulation and the fear a victim experienced?
5. Why is it important to use the victims' own words when documenting their description of the asphyxiation assault?
6. Why is it important to ask a victim what caused the assault to stop?
7. What defenses might come up in court that could be countered by clearly establishing the fear and trauma the victim experienced, as well as the intent of the perpetrator?

8. How does the experience of a victim who is asphyxiated compare to the experience of a victim who is murdered? Why is this significant?
- What can officers do to obtain this information and how should it be documented?
 - How can this information be used to set bonds, or impact the outcome of the case?