



**“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”
– Desmond Tutu**

Dear Friends,

As a year that brought unimaginable challenge and loss comes to a close, we must push ourselves to find the light in the midst of the dark. This year, the heroes who continue to risk their lives on the frontlines to keep our families fed, to heal our sick, and to protect our most vulnerable represent the brightest lights that give us hope.

While our hearts overflow with gratitude for the selflessness of each and every essential worker across the globe, we are honored to dedicate our December E-News to the tireless work of the police officers who keep our communities safe during these unprecedented times. With tremendous appreciation, we highlight the work of officers who have dedicated their work in alignment with the Institute to serve survivors of near and non-fatal strangulation assaults.

We are so excited to introduce you to seven of our amazing faculty members who continue to make waves in their communities in an effort to bring greater awareness and support to strangulation prevention. Each of our featured officers share their best tips and favorite resources that we hope will fill you with inspiration to take with you into the new year. We wish you all a blessed holiday season.

Always with Great HOPE,
Gael Strack and Casey Gwinn

Law Enforcement Spotlights

Mike Agnew

Bio: Michael was the lead Domestic Violence Detective with the Fresno Police Department for 15 years. Michael helped develop several domestic violence courses for POST which he teaches. Michael was recognized by the

California Attorney General's Office Task Force on the Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence as a statewide expert and has been asked by the task force to testify before its regional hearings on domestic violence.



What is the best tip you have to other officers working with strangulation survivors? You have to slow down and remind yourself this is a high lethality type of assault.

Do not treat it as a simple assault as the victim denies any injury. You have just heard the tip of the iceberg from the victim. Get the history! Get the symptoms! Get medical lined up. FOLLOW-UP! Please do not give the prosecution only an original investigation. FOLLOW-UP!

What are you looking forward to working on? I am able to teach at the Police Academy where my topic has always been Domestic Violence. But next month I will also be taking over the Victimology section where I will be including information on the impact of trauma and how it plays such a large role when interviewing victims.

Bob Frechette



Bio: Robert is a detective with the Rochester, New Hampshire Police Department and specializes in crimes of domestic violence. Robert is also a nationally registered paramedic. Robert is one of the founders of the Strafford County Family Justice Center. He worked closely with the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence in making non-fatal strangulation a felony in the state of NH.

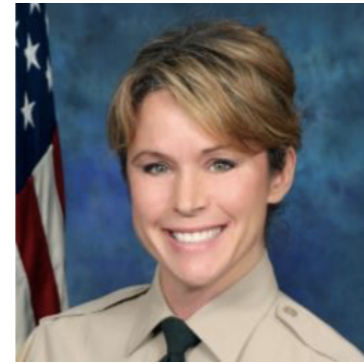
What is the best tip you have to other officers working with strangulation survivors? Educate yourself on strangulation and listen to the survivor without interrupting. Their account of what happened isn't going to be linear and hearing/documenting their experience is just as important and identifying and collecting physical evidence.

What work do you feel most proud of? Although there is still a lot more work to do, I am proud of the fact that we've improved the response to strangulation in our state. In particular, I am so pleased with how well the response within my agency and County has improved.

Rachael Frost

Bio: A 20-year law enforcement veteran and threat assessment and management investigator, Rachael specializes in intimate partner and family violence to include domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and more.

For more than a decade, she has developed teams across wide jurisdictions and disciplines to work in concert to address intimate partner violence and threat, both internally and externally.



What is the best tip you have to other officers working with strangulation survivors?

Treat everyone as if they were your most cherished person in the world when it comes to providing victim and emergency services. Be real - show them respect, kindness and understanding. Listen. If you do not understand, it is okay to let them know. It is who you are and how you are treating them that will help the victim feel comfortable enough to share with you. (And get lots of history.) Also - never accept in your agency and community that "this is just the way things are" when you are dissatisfied with something and know it could be done better. Get out there and make it happen.

What have you done since attending the Masters Course? Created a countywide strangulation protocol, strangulation form, and DV form for use by our Sheriff's Department. Incorporated strangulation into threat assessment and brought strangulation issues and concerns to the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals' conference (2017). Taught different duty stations of the Air Force regarding strangulation, and at numerous other law enforcement, corporate, and multidisciplinary sites across America. Became an expert witness in strangulation. Etc.

Nathan Griesse



Bio: Nate Griesse is a domestic violence detective in the Special Victims Unit of the Missoula Police Department in Montana. Detective Griesse spearheaded reform of current practices associated with non-fatal domestic violence strangulation investigations for the entirety of Missoula County. Detective Griesse rewrote policy and SOPs to include a response for non-fatal strangulation investigations. He partnered with a multi-disciplinary team to create

the first ever standardized county wide response to strangulation. He provides training to professionals to educate and promote a consistent community response to non-fatal domestic violence strangulations.

What is the best tip you have to other officers working with strangulation survivors?

The best advice that I can give to officers working with strangulation survivors is to understand that survivor behavior can be a trauma response. Officers need to understand that if a survivor is acting hysterical, irrational, combative, or having difficulty with chronological memory recall, these are all neurological symptoms of strangulation. Having this understanding will help the officer to dig deeper in their investigation.

Additionally, Officers need to make sure the survivors are educated on the medical risks associated with strangulation during their investigation. Knowledge is power in regard to survivor cooperation in getting medical attention. The more the survivor understands the medical risks, the more they will be willing to go to the hospital following the strangulation.

What are you looking forward to working on? I am looking forward to providing continual training and education to other law enforcement agencies, dispatchers, advocates, and medical professionals as well as leading a team of students from the University of Montana to conduct a research study in collaboration with the Montana Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission. This study will look at the backgrounds of the last 200 domestic violence related homicides in Montana. The objective will be to identify the percentage of abusers that have a documented or reported history of strangulation precipitating the domestic violence related homicide. The goal of this project is to provide local statistics that will also confirm national statistics to support law change to further protect survivors of domestic violence.

Joshua Helton

Bio: Joshua Helton is a 14-year law enforcement veteran with a municipal agency in Northern California. Joshua's projects involve work to improve the response to non-fatal strangulation assaults in his region. He has provided training for law enforcement officers, victim advocates, prosecutors, child welfare services personnel, and medical providers about domestic violence investigations, the dangers of strangulation assaults, and law enforcement response to sexual assault crimes.



What have you done since attending our Advanced/ Masters Course?

Since the Advanced and Masters Courses I have worked to improve strangulation awareness training in my department, my District Attorney's Office, our local child protective services agency, and our local emergency department physicians. The training with the physicians contributed to the fact our local emergency department has begun using CTA's of the head and neck to evaluate strangulation victims. The training received at the Advanced and Masters Courses has allowed me to better support other officers with their strangulation assault investigations. I have also testified several times as an expert witness on strangulation assaults and domestic violence dynamics in my county. Last, but not least, I was blessed with an opportunity to collaborate with the CDAA and the Training Institute to update the Investigations chapter of the CDAA publication *Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases*.

What is the best tip you have to other officers working with strangulation survivors? Find a way to receive training from the Training

Institute on Strangulation Prevention, in order to increase your knowledge about strangulation assaults, improve your strangulation investigations, and work to hold strangulation offenders accountable for their actions.

Bill Hernandez



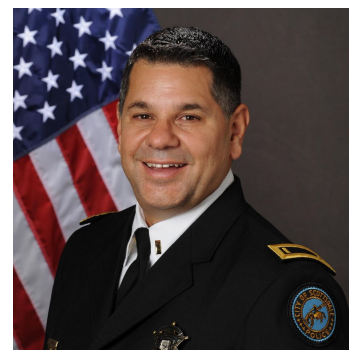
Bio: Bill Hernandez has been working at the Napa Police Department for over 21 years and is currently the Domestic Violence Detective and grant director for the Law Enforcement Specialized Units Grant. He has served as the liaison between Napa P.D. and NEWS, a domestic violence and sexual assault service provider, for the past 11 years. Bill has conducted multiple trainings about the dangers surrounding strangulation as well as the hazards of domestic violence and how it affects children and their brain development. Bill is qualified as an expert witness in strangulation.

What is the best tip you have to other officers working with strangulation survivors? Be patient and listen. Follow standardized questions forms, otherwise you will forget questions. Use a mannequin head for the survivor to demonstrate the body positions.

What work do you feel most proud of? In relation to strangulation, I am most proud of assisting in updating the CDAA Investigation and Prosecution of Strangulation Cases Manual. By contributing to the manual and having it on my CV, I have not had any questions from defense attorneys about me being considered an expert witness in court.

Dan Rincon

Bio: Dan Rincon is a 28-year veteran of the Scottsdale Police Department and earned a Master's in Criminal Justice Degree from Arizona State University. Dan was the Domestic Violence Unit supervisor for over five years. He served on the East Valley Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board and has been a commissioner since 2012 on the Governor's Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women.



What work do you feel most proud of?

In the almost 30 years I have worked at the Scottsdale Police Department, it is without hesitation that the work that I am most proud of relates to my work in the area of domestic violence. Since 2006, I have been the co-director of the Scottsdale Family Advocacy Center (2006 – 2011), conducted multiple strangulation investigating trainings in Arizona, worked with the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, Honor Healthcare forensic nurses, and local law enforcement to create the first countywide Strangulation Investigative Protocol in the country, which includes a forensic examination. This protocol

directly resulted in the increased filing of these types of cases from 14.5% to as high as 80%.

What is the best tip you have to other officers working with strangulation survivors:

I have four principles that I always keep in mind when working with a strangulation survivor:

1. **Understanding domestic violence survivors.** Maintain a healthy mindset. We know how likely domestic violence victims are controlled and coerced. We cannot become frustrated when their cooperation isn't always visible. Investigate every case like a homicide and begin each case with the approach that you have to prove this case without your survivor.
2. **Take ownership of what is tangible.** It is not unusual to be frustrated with law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice agencies because of their actions. Focus on what you can do to make every case better. In the end, it's the only thing you have full control over. Leave no stone unturned.
3. **Let survivors tell their story.** So many times all we want to know is, "What happened today?," We can't forget that it is their relationship history that gives content to what happened today. Be a good listener... their life might depend on it.
4. Most importantly, **We need to sincerely care about our survivors.** Survivors are very good at reading body language. If we are not genuine, they will see right through you and trust will never be earned.

Special Thank You - Detective Joey Bianco



cases. We are forever grateful.

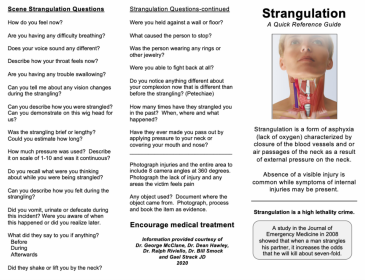
The Institute would like to thank and commend Det. Joey Bianco from the San Diego Police Department for his years of service working in the Domestic Violence Unit. As a detective, Det. Bianco distinguished himself in the handling of non-fatal strangulation cases, working with traumatized victims, testifying in court as an expert and training others. Most recently, Det. Bianco left the SDPD to move back east to be closer to family. Thank you Det. Bianco for your contributions to improving San Diego's response to the handling of non-fatal strangulation

Featured Resources

This month, our featured officers shared resources that they have created or found most useful in their work with survivors:

Strangulation Trifold

Recommended by Mike Agnew



Strangulation Quick Reference Guide
Document All Findings in an Appropriate Report or Chart

Face	Eyes & Eyelids	Nose	Ears	Mouth
<input type="checkbox"/> Red/flushed <input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae <input type="checkbox"/> Scratches	<input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae R/L eye <input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae R/L lid <input type="checkbox"/> Bloody conjunctiva	<input type="checkbox"/> Nosebleed <input type="checkbox"/> Deformity <input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae (in or on)	<input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae (in or on) <input type="checkbox"/> Bleeding from ear canal	<input type="checkbox"/> Bruising <input type="checkbox"/> Swollen tongue/lips <input type="checkbox"/> Cuts/abrasions
Under Chin	Neck	Shoulders	Chest	Head
<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratches <input type="checkbox"/> Bruising <input type="checkbox"/> Abrasions	<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratches <input type="checkbox"/> Bruising <input type="checkbox"/> Abrasions <input type="checkbox"/> Edema (swelling) <input type="checkbox"/> Fingerprint impressions <input type="checkbox"/> Ligation marks	<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratches <input type="checkbox"/> Bruising <input type="checkbox"/> Abrasions	<input type="checkbox"/> Redness <input type="checkbox"/> Scratches <input type="checkbox"/> Bruising <input type="checkbox"/> Abrasions	<input type="checkbox"/> Petechiae <input type="checkbox"/> Missing hair <input type="checkbox"/> Edema <input type="checkbox"/> Fractures <input type="checkbox"/> Contusion
Breathing Changes	Voice Changes	Swallowing Changes	Behavioral Changes	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty Breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Hyperventilation <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to breathe	<input type="checkbox"/> Raspy Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Hoarse Voice <input type="checkbox"/> Coughing <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to or difficulty speaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble swallowing <input type="checkbox"/> Painful swallowing <input type="checkbox"/> Neck Pain <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea/vomiting <input type="checkbox"/> Drooling	<input type="checkbox"/> Agitation <input type="checkbox"/> Annesia <input type="checkbox"/> PTSD <input type="checkbox"/> Hallucinations <input type="checkbox"/> Combativeness	<input type="checkbox"/> Dizzy <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches <input type="checkbox"/> Fainted <input type="checkbox"/> Urination <input type="checkbox"/> Defecation

Strangulation Reference Card

Recommended by Bob Frechette

Resource Library

Recommended by Rachael Frost
Password to access: resource2020

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RESOURCES | THE READING ROOM | LINKEDIN

RESOURCES

Below, please find links to Power Point "Presentations" saved as PDF files, "Documents" for use as guidelines or reproductions in your own jurisdiction or place of business, and "Associations and Resource Sites" links to many worthwhile sites to include structured professional judgement tools, associations out there "doing the good work," and much more. These are shared for your review and to use as you see fit. I do not specifically endorse any action for your environment, as you are more than capable of doing that on your own. These are just available here as you collect information along the way.

Good luck moving forward. It is time to make a difference.



Missoula County Wide Strangulation Supplemental Form

Recommended by Nathan Griesse

DPD DV Requirement Checklist

Recommended by Josh Helton

[illegible][illegible]

Napa Police Department – Strangulation/Suffocation Questionnaire

Meets/Hears/One hand grip / J L Two hands, Forearm, Kne, Feet, Chokehold, Lights, or Suffocation
Ligature brought to the scene? ☐ Yes ☐ No Ligature photographed and collected? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Strangulation/Suffocation occurred? ☐ Yes ☐ No Time of death estimated? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Pressure used? ☐ Weak ☐ Moderate ☐ Medical attention? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Strangulation/Suffocation occurred? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Difficulty breathing or swallowing? ☐ Yes ☐ No Loss of hearing or vision? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Strangulation/Suffocation occurred? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Was victim shaken while being strangled? ☐ Yes ☐ No Choked back on own tongue? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Victim trapped under wall/furniture/ground? ☐ Yes ☐ No
USPS forensic? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How did victim hear/feel fear/hurt/panic and after? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How did victim see, feel, believe, or hear? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How did victim see during strangulation/suffocation? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How did victim hear during strangulation/suffocation? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How did victim see? ☐ Yes ☐ No Did V attempt to stop S? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How did victim think was going to happen during strangulation/suffocation?
meets with or other parts? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Did victim try to avoid being asphyxiated if symptoms aware? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Did victim try to avoid being asphyxiated if symptoms aware? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Signature: _____ Date: _____ Case Number: _____

Napa Valley_PD
Strangulation FI Card
Recommended by Bill Hernandez

Maricopa County Attorney's Strangulation Protocol Manual

Recommended by Dan Rincon



BILL MONTGOMERY
MARICOPA COUNTY ATTORNEY
REVISED 2015

Upcoming Training

February Advanced Course on Strangulation Prevention - Registration Now Open!



Survey of the Month

The Institute wants to hear from YOU! Complete our monthly survey today for a chance to win a limited edition HOPE mask.

**CLICK HERE
TO COMPLETE
OUR SURVEY**

AND ENTER TO WIN A LIMITED EDITION HOPE MASK!

Social Media/Other Announcements



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