

# BASIC TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERVIEWING

Patrol Briefing Training  
June 27, 2019

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## TRAUMA

- An event
- Threat/danger
- Fear/terror/horror
- Perceived lack of control



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• Brain perceives fear/horror/terror + lack of control  
• "Fear" circuitry takes over

### Event

### Survival

- FREEZE
- FLEE
- FIGHT... in service of fleeing

• Prefrontal cortex vs. limbic system

### Experience

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### Stress changes brain function

#### PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX

- Top-down Attention
- Integration of data
- Logical decision making

#### LIMBIC SYSTEM

- Bottom-up Attention
- Threat network
- Reflexive responses

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### Experience




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Trauma will likely impact a survivor's ability to recall details

## CENTRAL

- Spatial/location data
- Order of events
- Contextual cues

VS.

peripheral

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**Trauma-informed interview practices can assist in obtaining information**

# **CENTRAL**

- **Start with memories**
  - **Sensory-based questions**
  - **Emotions & thoughts**
- VS.**
- **peripheral**

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## **Trauma-informed interviewing**

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| • Avoid interruption                 | • <b>Show empathy</b>                   |
| • Avoid leading questions            | • <b>Be patient</b>                     |
| • Avoid sequencing                   | • <b>Use open-ended questions</b>       |
| • Avoid sharing personal information | • <b>Use the interviewee's language</b> |

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## **Trauma-informed interviewing**

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|---|--|
| • <b>Acknowledge the trauma/pain of the situation</b>   | ✓ <b>“What are you able to tell me about your experience?”</b> |
| • <b>Ask about 5 W's after experiential information</b> | ✓ <b>“Tell me more about that...”</b>                          |
| • <b>Prepare subject for future contact</b>             | ✓ <b>“Help me understand your thoughts when...”</b>            |

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## Trauma-informed interviewing

### Additional resources

- **Dr. Jim Hopper, PhD** (<https://www.jimhopper.com/>)
- **Dr. David Lisak, PhD** (<http://www.davidlisak.com/>)
- **FETI interview technique** (<https://CertifiedFETI.com/>)

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