



West Valley City POLICE

Office of Chief Lee W. Russo

3575 South Market Street, West Valley City, Utah, 84119

Groundbreaking WVCPD Sexual Assault Protocol Drastically Increases Prosecution Rates

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Sexual assault cases investigated by the West Valley City Police Department are four times more likely to be prosecuted says the results of a new study released by a Brigham Young University researcher.

The West Valley City Police Department has made unprecedented efforts to improve our service to, and support of, victims of crime. We have made remarkable progress through our understanding of the impact trauma has on sexual assault victims and we have lead the way in implementing new protocols that ensure compassionate treatment for sexual assault victims.

In 2013, West Valley City Police, along with the Utah Prosecution Council, developed a "Trauma Informed Victim Interview" protocol, or TIVI. In 2014, West Valley City Police implemented that protocol as well as special training for investigators as part of our investigation into sexual assault cases. The TIVI protocol takes into account the effects of trauma on a victim's memory and behavior and with that impact in mind, guides investigators in conducting interviews that are more successful and comprehensive than interviews gathered with previous investigative techniques.

In a virtually unprecedented move, West Valley City Police Department Chief Lee Russo allowed an independent outside evaluator access to study this protocol and its impact on victims and cases. Brigham Young University researcher and Forensic Nurse, Julie Valentine spent one year analyzing the TIVI protocol. Valentine also provided a survey which was given to victims of sexual assault whose cases were handled by the WVCPD. The results from the survey show high levels of victim satisfaction. Additionally, Valentine analyzed the data regarding screening and prosecution rates of cases in which the TIVI protocol was utilized. The study shows drastic increases in the number of sexual assault cases prosecuted.

STUDY FINDINGS TO DATE, MARCH 2016, N=64		
Measurable Outcomes	NIJ SANE TOOLKIT	PILOT STUDY Findings to date
Screening of Adult Sexual Assault Cases	33%	68%
Declination Rate	75%	56%
Charges Filed	9%	32%
Prosecuted	6%	24% (48 cases adjudicated, 75% of study cases)
Successfully Prosecuted	6%	22%

Sexual assault cases are typically the most complex and difficult to handle due to the traumatic impacts experienced by victims and witnesses. Having investigators specially trained to deal with post traumatic effects and well experienced in conducting these types of investigations has improve our ability to successfully conduct investigations, support the needs of victims and witnesses, and aid in improving the likelihood of prosecutions and convictions.

We invite members of the media to attend as Chief Lee Russo discusses these findings, what they mean for WVCPD, and how we're using this information to help improve processes for police departments in Utah and all over the nation.

Where: West Valley City Hall Multi-Purpose Room, 3600 South Constitution Blvd.

When: Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 2:00pm

Available for interview:

West Valley City Police Chief Lee Russo

Detective Justin Boardman - Det. Boardman has first-hand experience using the TIVI protocol as a detective in the West Valley City Police Department Special Victims Unit and is an original developer of the TIVI protocol

Julie Valentine – BYU researcher and forensic nurse who conducted study

Donna Kelley – Utah Prosecution Council and an original developer of TIVI protocol

Rachelle Hill – Victim Services Coordinator, West Valley City Victim Services

And special guest, Michelle Worthen – Worthen is a sexual assault survivor. Worthen's case was investigated by WVCPD Det. Boardman using the TIVI protocol. Worthen now advocates for sexual assault victims and their rights

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