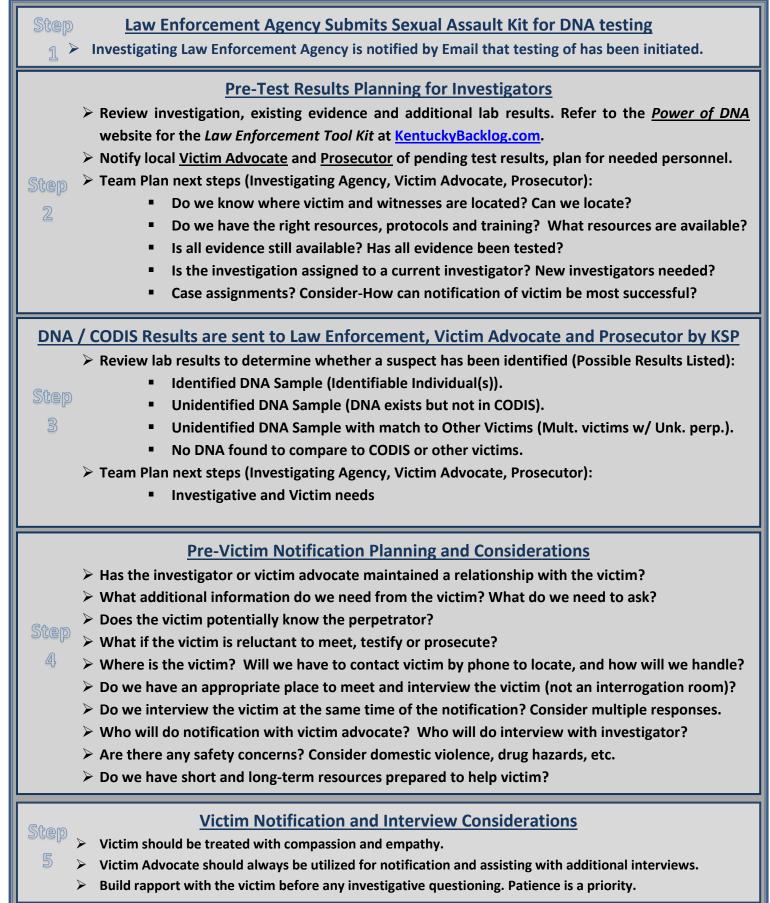
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-SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT BACKLOG-

## **<u>VICTIM</u>** and <u>INVESTIGATION</u> "Best Practice" Tips for LAW ENFORCEMENT

The following is a compilation of best practices for your agency to consider when working with a victim of sexual assault and the SAK Backlog.



## Victim Notification and Interview Considerations (Continued)

- > Explain the role of the Advocate, Law Enforcement and Prosecutor.
- > Be prepared to reschedule interview around the victim's needs.
- > Use Victim / Trauma Centered Interview Techniques.
  - Ask if it is Okay to discuss the incident.
  - Let victim know that discussing the incident may be difficult and to take their time.
  - Traumatized victims often need 24 to 48 hours to process the incident before they should be interviewed.
  - Be patient.
  - Allow yourself and the Victim Advocate time to develop trust with the victim.
  - Be careful about touching or hugging a victim who you do not have a personal relationship with.
  - Show empathy through your responses.
  - Be aware of surroundings and if others may be able to hear your questioning and responses and how that may affect your interview.
  - Be aware that victims will react differently. Angry, confused, upset, lackadaisical, depressed, scared, etc. These are all normal emotions and responses for a victim.
  - Remember that a victim under the influence, dressed provocatively, or having promiscuous tendencies can still be a victim. Perpetrators often target these individuals knowing they are less likely to report to police or be believed.
  - Treat victims as if they were your most important family member.
  - Be aware that some victims will need to process the new information and you may need to reschedule an interview.

## Additional Investigation Considerations

- > Know the details of your investigation and prioritize your case needs.
- > What information and evidence needs to be collected to support the DNA findings?
- > Where is the perpetrator? How do we find? What if in another jurisdiction?
- > Is perpetrator known to victim or family? Is perpetrator a possible serial sex offender?
- > Who needs to be interviewed or re-interviewed?
- Research the suspect's background, criminal history, law enforcement contacts, work history, education, phone history, active relationships, past and disgruntled relationships, finances, residence history, vehicle history, social media, habits, known clothing and shoes, unique characteristics, etc.
- > Collaborate with the prosecutor.
- > Do we need surveillance, search warrants, additional lab tests, polygraph, etc.?
- > Will discreet DNA samples need to be collected (Abandoned DNA, trash pull)?
- > Are their similar investigations / victims that may suggest a serial offender?
- Any additional corroborating evidence? Surveillance video, bank card usage, cell phone usage, touch DNA, fingerprints, shoe prints, receipts, social media, etc.
- > Develop arrest operations and officer safety considerations.
- > Develop an interview / interrogation, search warrant, and evidence gathering strategy.
- Perseverance Be driven to get the conviction and don't give up when the case gets tough.
- Patience and empathy will allow the victim to regain confidence in LE, your resources and her investigation

5 Continued

Step

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