

GRAND RIVER SOLUTIONS

Introduction to Fair, Thorough, and Trauma Informed Sexual Violence Investigations

> Chantelle Cleary, J.D. June 2021

Meet Your Facilitator



Chantelle Cleary, J.D. Director of Strategic Partnerships and Client Relations Chantelle Cleary is a nationally-recognized subject-matter expert in Title IX and related fields. She has more than 10 years of experience in the investigation and adjudication of sexual and interpersonal violence. She lectures extensively at universities and conferences throughout the U.S. on Title IX, VAWA, harassment, and implementation of best and emerging practices. Prior to joining Grand River Solutions, Chantelle served as the Director for Institutional Equity and Title IX at Cornell University, and before that as the Assistant Vice President for Equity and Compliance and Title IX Coordinator at the University at Albany. In these roles, she provided direct, hands-on experience in the fields of Title IX, civil rights, employment law, and workplace and academic investigations. Her responsibilities included focusing on diversity efforts, sexual assault prevention and training, affirmative action, and protecting minors on campus.



Grand River Solutions



Vision

We exist to help create safe and equitable work and educational environments.

Mission

Bring systemic change to how school districts and institutions of higher education address their Clery Act & Title IX obligations.



Core Values

- Responsive Partnership
- Innovation
- ✤ Accountability
- ✤ Transformation
- ✤ Integrity



Day One Agenda





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Title IX's Requirements

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Procedural Requirements for Investigations





Notice TO BOTH PARTIES





An advisor o choice Written notification of meetings, etc., and sufficient time to prepare Q

Opportunity to

review ALL

evidence, and 10 days to submit a

written response to

the evidence prior

to completion of the report



Report summarizing relevant evidence and 10 day review of report prior to hearing



Notice Requirements

Notice of the allegations, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview. Sufficient details include:

the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known,

the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment under § 106.30,

and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known.

The written notice must include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, under paragraph (b)(5)(iv) of this section, and may inspect and review evidence under paragraph (b)(5)(vi) of this section.

The written notice must inform the parties of any provision in the recipient's code of conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process



Advisor of Choice During the Investigation

The advisor can be anyone, including an attorney or a witness.

Institutions cannot place restrictions on who can serve.

Institutions can create rules and guidelines for participation in the investigation

No specific training required

Written Notification of Meetings and Sufficient Time to Prepare

Equal Opportunity to Present Evidence

Evidence Review

Parties must have equal opportunity to inspect and review evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint



Investigative Report and Review

After reviewing and considering the comments on the evidence, the investigator will generate a report that summarizes the relevant evidence.

That report will be shared with the parties and they will have 10 more days to comment



Procedural Requirements for Hearings

Must be live, but can be conducted remotely

You may not compel participation

Standard of proof used may be preponderance of the evidence or clear and convincing; standard must be the same for student and employee matters

Cross examination must be permitted and must be conducted by advisor of choice or provided by the institution

Decision maker determines relevancy of questions and evidence offered

Exclusion of Evidence if no cross examination

Written decision must be issued that includes finding and sanction



"Directly Related" and "Relevant Evidence"

Directly Related Evidence

Regulations do not define "Directly Related" Evidence

Preamble states it should be interpreted using its plain and ordinary meaning.

Term is broader than:

- "all relevant evidence" as otherwise used in Title IX regulations, and
- "any information that will be used during informal and formal disciplinary meetings and hearings" as used in Clery Act

Includes evidence upon which the school does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source.

"Relevant" Evidence The Department declines to define "relevant", indicating that term "should be interpreted using [its] plain and ordinary meaning."

See, e.g., Federal Rule of Evidence 401 Test for Relevant Evidence:

"Evidence is relevant if:

- (a) it has any tendency to make a fact more or less probable than it would be without the evidence; and
- (b) the fact is of consequence in determining the action."

Evidence That is Not "Relevant"

"Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant,

- unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or
- if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent."

"require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege."

Physical and mental health records and attorney-client privileged communications would fit within scope of this prohibition

Who Decides?

Department emphasizes repeatedly in Preamble that investigators have discretion to determine relevance.

Subject to parties' right to argue upon review of "directly related" evidence that certain
information not included in investigative report is relevant and should be given more weight.

Investigators will have to balance discretionary decisions not to summarize certain evidence in report against:

- Each party's right to argue their case, and
- Fact that decisions regarding responsibility will be made at hearing, not investigation stage.



The Requirement of Impartiality

Section 106.45(b)(1)(iii)

The grievance process must require that any individual designated by the recipient as Title IX Coordinator, investigator, <u>decision maker</u>, or facilitator of informal resolution not to have a conflict of interest or bias

For or against complainants or respondents generally, or
 An individual complainant or respondent

Impermissible Bias

Making a decision, determination, or finding that is based on something other than the evidence and specific facts of the case.

What Constitutes Bias?

Conduct a fact specific, objective inquiry based in common sense, to determine bias

Includes:

- Decision-making that is grounded in stereotypes
- Different treatment based on a person's sex or other protected characteristic
- A decision based on something other than the facts



Conflict of Interest

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Avoiding Prejudgment of the Facts

Requires that the Title IX professional refrain from making a judgement on individual facts, the allegations, or whether a policy violation occurred until they have had the opportunity to consider all of the evidence.

An Impartial Investigation is

Not influenced by bias or conflict of interest

Committed to decisions based on an objective view of the facts and evidence as you know them and as they evolve

Truth seeking, not your truth" confirming

Trauma Informed Practices

In the preamble, the Department permits the use of trauma informed practices and recognizes that trauma informed practices can be used in an impartial and non-biased manner.

Trauma informed practices must be applied equally to all genders.



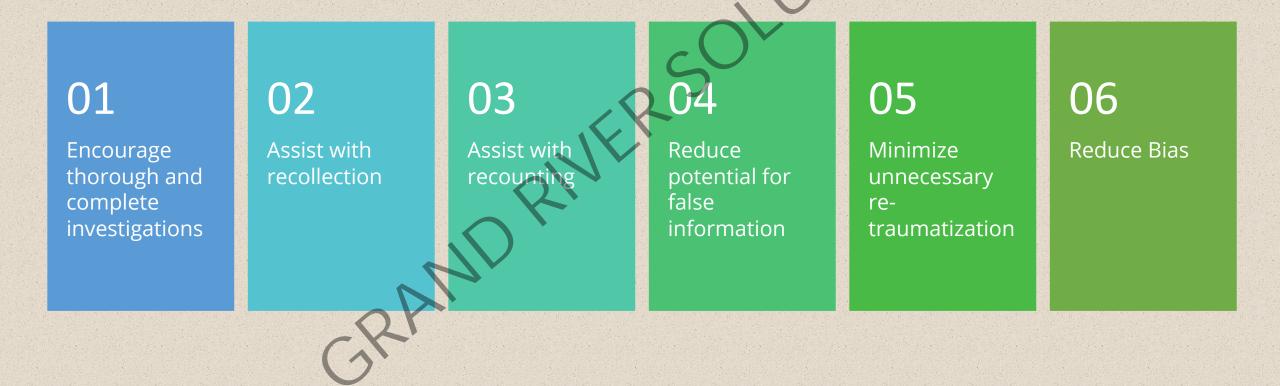
The Proper Application of Trauma Informed Practices

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Trauma informed practices provide tools/techniques for interviewing and engaging with the Complainant, Respondent, and Witnesses.



Trauma Informed Practices are Designed to:



Misapplication of Trauma Informed Practices It is a misapplication of trauma informed principles to allow potential evidence of trauma to:

- 1.Influence the interpretation of a specific item of evidence;
- 2.Substitute for missing evidence;
- 3.To serve as a justification for not doing a full and thorough investigation;
- 4. Cause a biased belief in the veracity of one or more party.



The Importance of Understanding the Potential Impact of Trauma

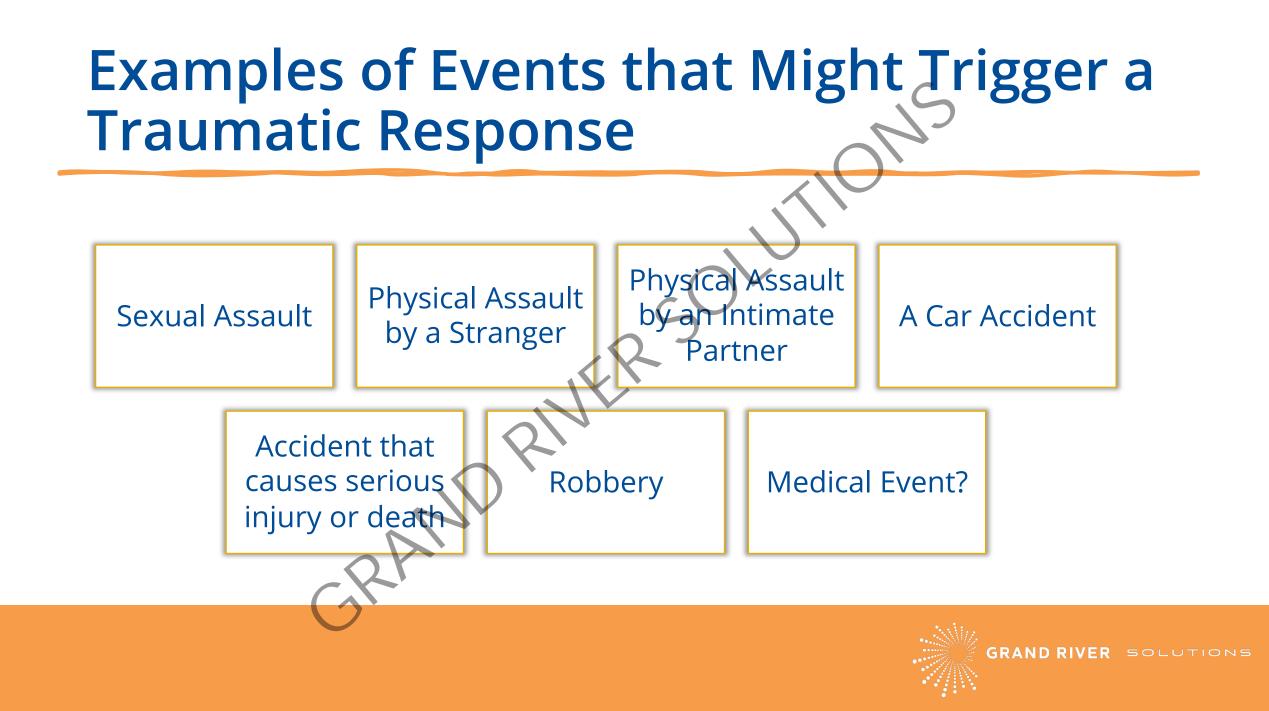
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Trauma

An event that is experienced as terrifying, horrifying, or threatening and that is coupled with an actual or perceived lack of control.





When trauma occurs, there are very real changes in brain function that <u>may</u> affect a person's ability to make memory and to recount their experience.

Common Characteristics of Disclosures by a Trauma Brain

Inconsistent

Non-linear

Fragmented

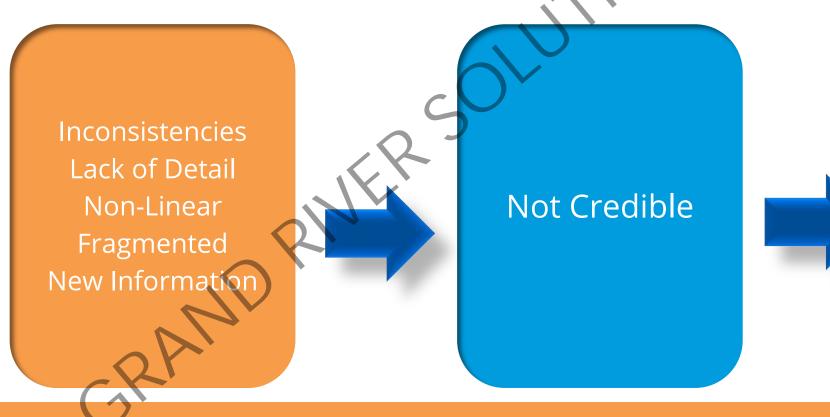
Lack of detail

New information

Affect is unexpected



Historically, the seemingly inconsistent behaviors that frequently accompany disclosures of sexual assault and interpersonal violence resulted in the belief that the victim was being dishonest.









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When an investigator uses "trauma informed" tools, they are less likely to:

CONCLUDE, WITHOUT CONDUCTING A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION, THAT THE REPORTING INDIVIDUAL IS NOT CREDIBLE PREMATURELY CONCLUDE THE INVESTIGATION

ASK QUESTIONS OR MAKE DECISIONS FOUNDED IN BIAS



CAUSE ADDITIONAL HARM JEOPARDIZE FUTURE REPORTING



The Future...

An understanding of trauma and its potential impact should encourage investigators to keep an open mind, and it should prevent investigators from immediately interpreting seemingly inconsistent behaviors with deception. An understanding of trauma provides another explanation for these seemingly inconsistent behaviors.

This is essential to a fair and thorough investigation.

The Investigation Continues....



Developing an Investigative Strategy

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Essential Steps of an Investigation



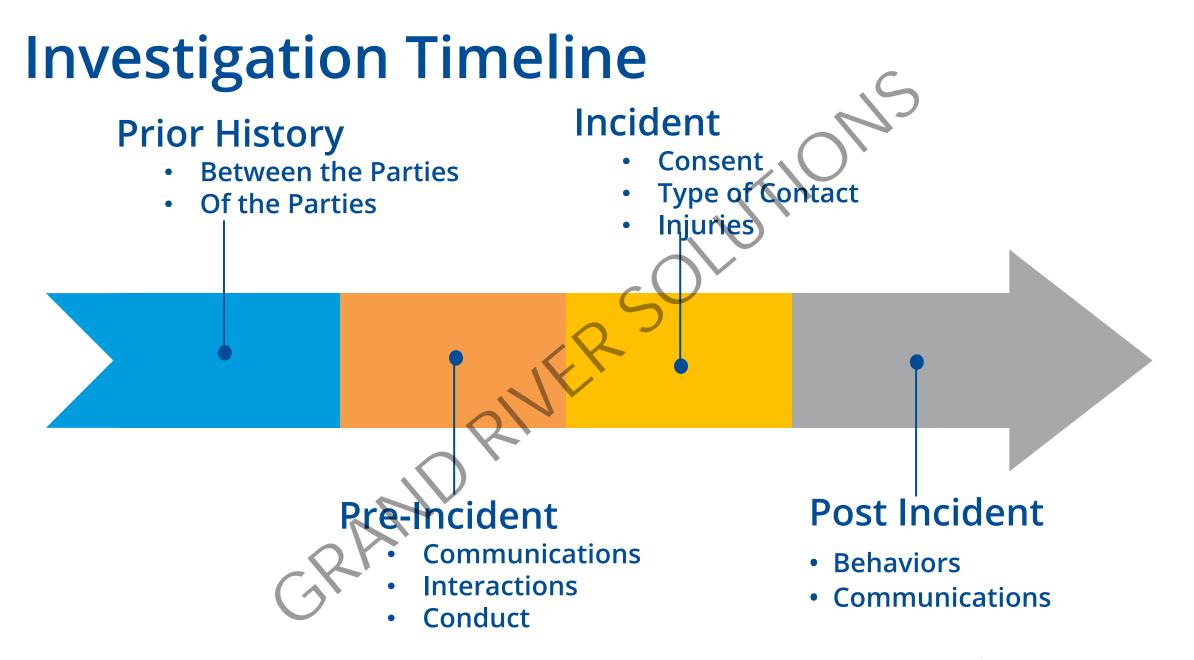
Understand the Scope of the Investigation

Review the formal complaint

Ask questions if unsure

The Process Developing an Investigative Strategy





Title IX Hearing Requirements: The Impact on Investigations



Considerations for Evidence Collection in a Post-Regulatory World



The Importance of Organization



Investigative interviews

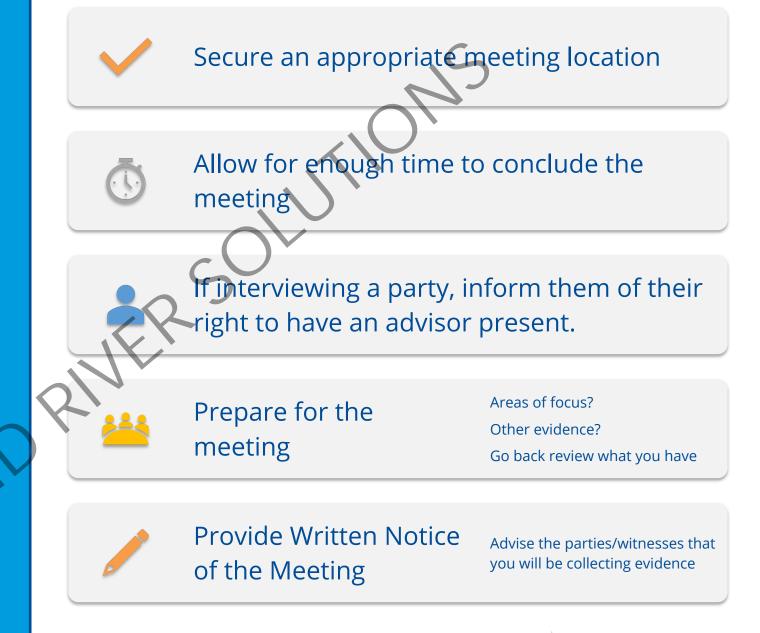
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Prior to the Interview



Set Expectations

What they should expect of you

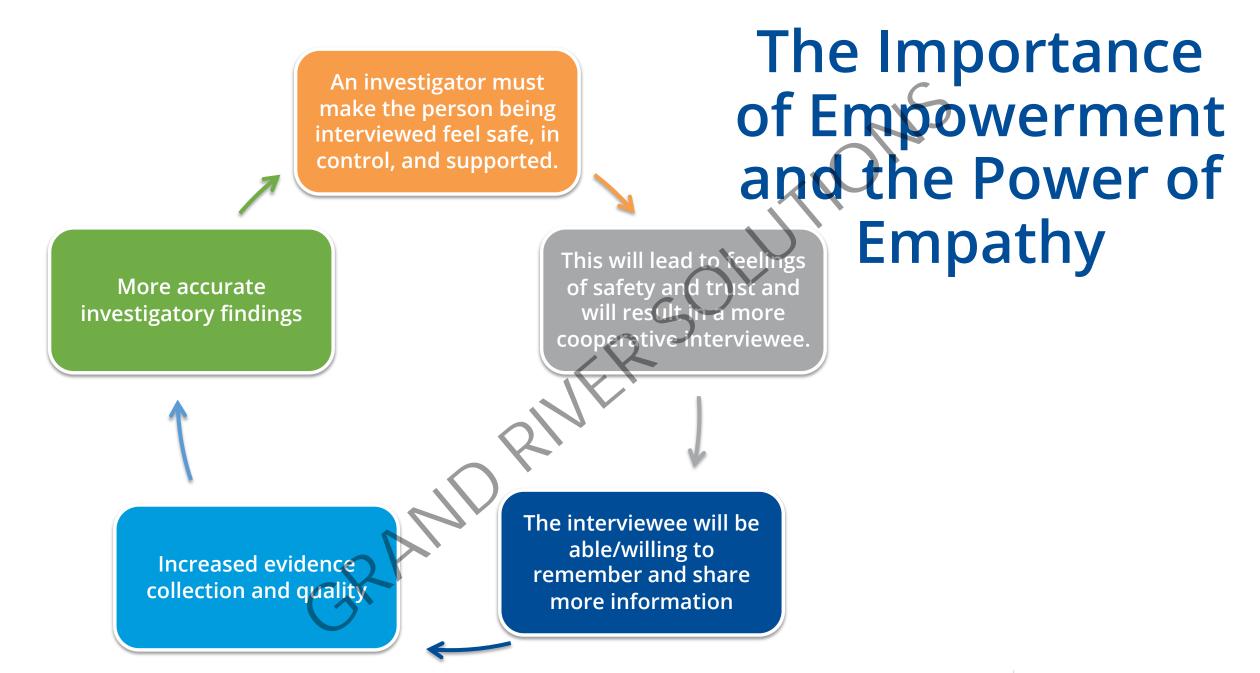
- That you are neutral
- That you will listen, what they are saying is important to you
- That you will keep the information they share private
- What you will do with recording/notes
- That you may have to ask difficult questions
- Patience, respect, and appreciation
- This will not be their only opportunity to speak with

What you expect of them

• Honesty

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- That they will seek clarity if needed (give them permission to do so)
- That they wont guess or fill in blanks



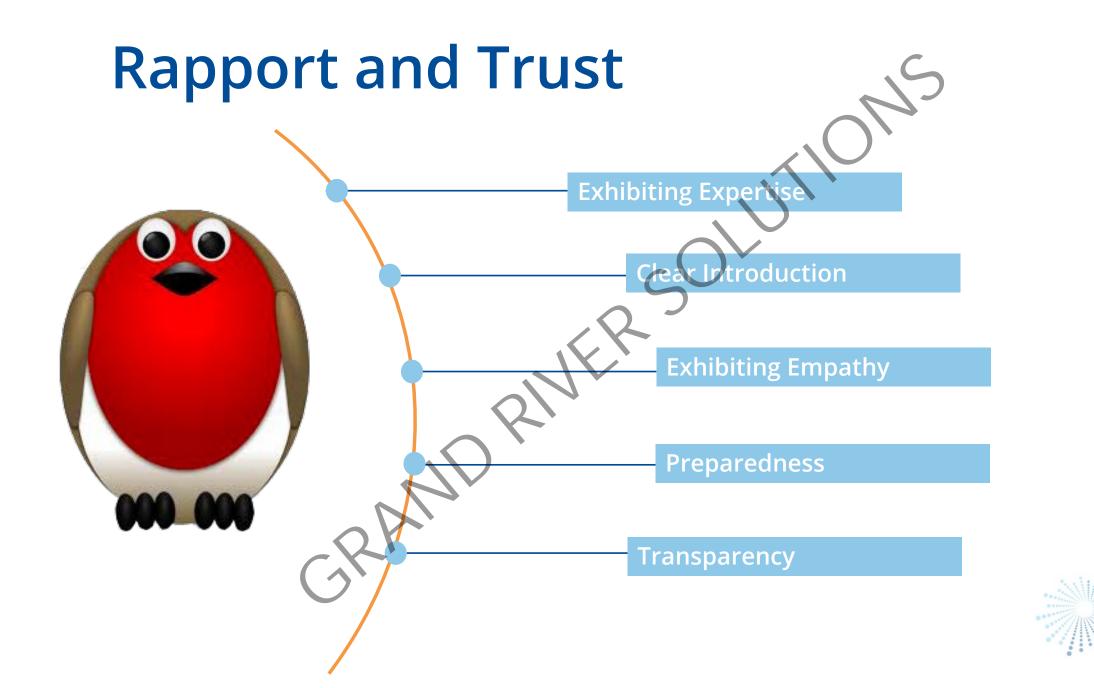
How do we...



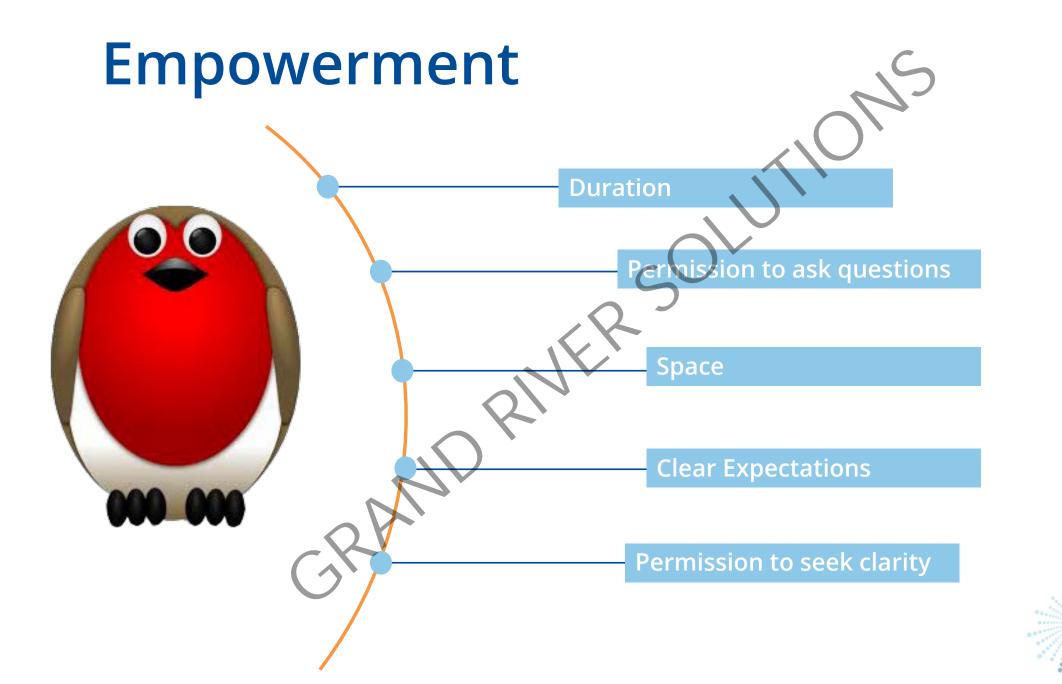
Build Rapport and Trust?

Empower?



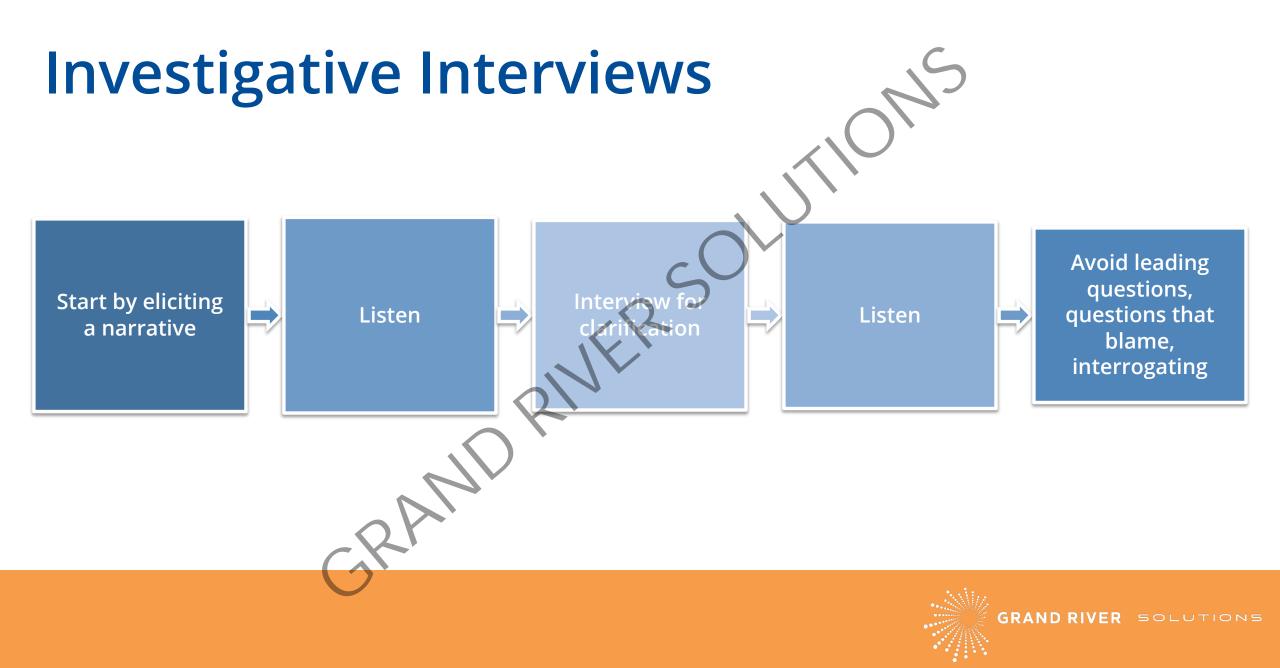


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Start the interview by eliciting a narrative...

Where would you like to begin?

Start where you are comfortable and share what you are able to remember.

> Allow the person to speak uninterrupted. This takes patience.



What are you <u>able</u> to tell me about your experience? Next, ask questions that are intended to clarify and more deeply explore the information and details provided by the person in their narrative.

Do Ask:

- Interview for clarification
- Help me understand
- Can you tell me more about...?
- Is there anything else you can share about...?

Interrogation

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- Questions that blame
- Questions that imply doubt
- Leading questions



Explore implicit memories by asking questions about the sensory experience and peripheral details.

- What are you able to tell me about:
 - What you saw?
 - What you heard?
 - What you smelled?
 - What you felt?
 - What you tasted?
- What are you able to tell me about any images, smells, or sounds that keep coming back to you?



"I felt an animal. I think it was dead. I was terrified that he hurt it. I thought he would do the same to me."



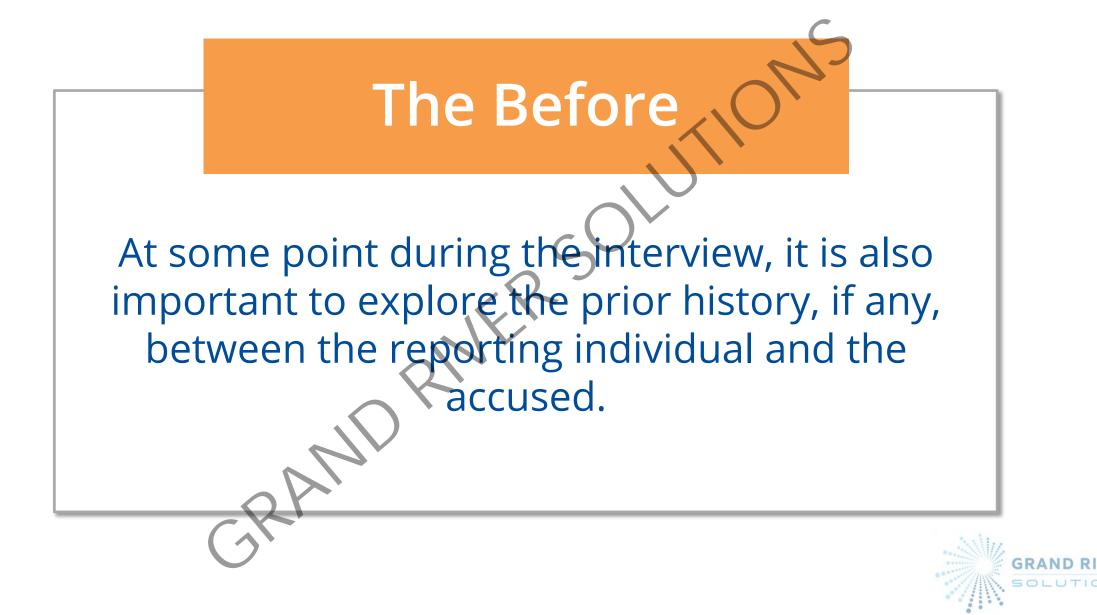


"Help me understand why you keep rubbing your wrists like that?"



Capture the Entire Experience

- If you have to, ask about the physical and emotional reactions to the incident.
- Conclude with very open-ended questions:
 - What was the most difficult part of this experience for you?
 - Is there something that stands out/that you just can't stop thinking about?
 - Is there anything more that you would like me to know?



And The After

It is also important to explore the events following the incident. Oftentimes, the best evidence is produced after the incident.

- The parties' psychological reactions
- Changes in behavior
- Witnesses to the psychological reaction
 - "Has anyone expressed concern about you since the assault?"
- Communication/contact between the victim and perpetrator



Throughout the Interview



After the Interview: Actions

Notes Memorialize the Summary Interview in writing Transcript Provide Opportunity for the party or witness to review it Provide opportunity for party or witness to provide a response Incorporate the response

After the Interview: Reflection



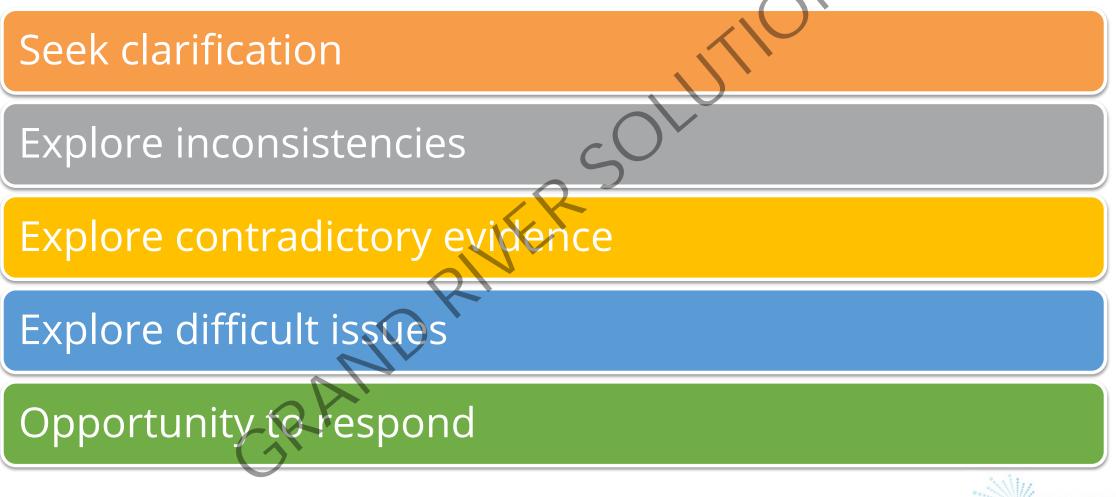
Questions? Follow Us: **Email Us:** @GrandRiverSols Chantelle@grandriversolutions.com f in **Grand River Solutions** info@grandriversolutions.com



Quick Review! GRANDRINK

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Follow Up Interviews





Follow Up Interview Approach

Explain the purpose of the follow up

Set the stage for the topics you will be covering 3

Do not avoid asking the hard questions



The "Hard" Questions



How to Ask the Hard

Questions,

Lay a foundation for the questions

- Explain why you are asking it
- Share the evidence that you are asking about, or that you are seeking a response to

Be deliberate and mindful in your questions:

• Can you tell me what you were thinking when....

- Help me understand what you were feeling when...
- Are you able to tell me more about...



Evidence Collection and Assessment

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Evidence "Something (including testimony, documents, tangible objects) that tends to prove or disprove the existence of an alleged fact; anything presented to the senses and offered to prove the existence or nonexistence of a fact." **Black's Law Dictionary**

Types of Evidence

Direct Evidence

• Evidence that is based on personal knowledge or observation and that, if true, proves a fact without inference or presumption.

Circumstantial Evidence

• Evidence based on inference and not on personal knowledge or observation.

Corroborating Evidence

• Evidence that differs from but strengthens or confirms what other evidence shows





Evidence Collection



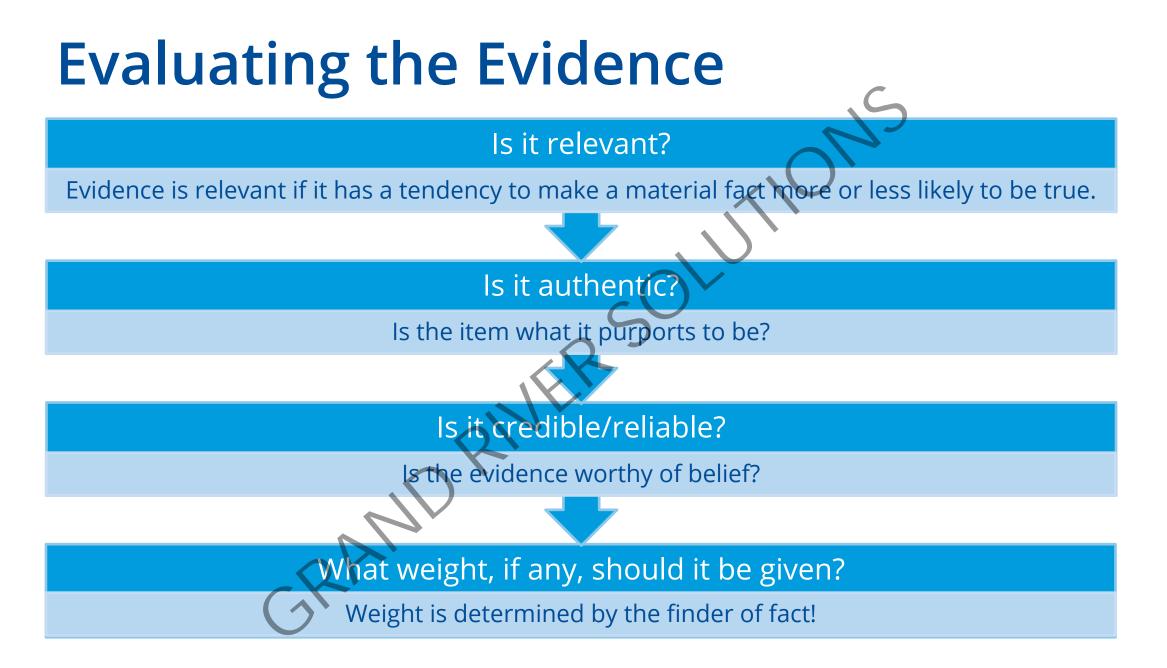
Identify the items of evidence that you would like to obtain Develop an intentional strategy for obtaining that evidence

Overcome barriers to evidence collection

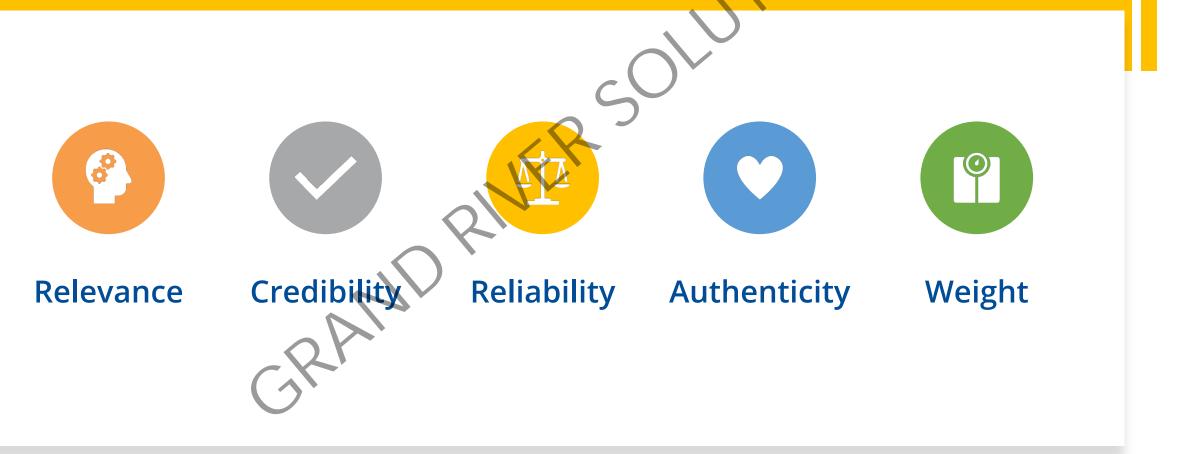
Considerations about collecting certain types of evidence







A Thorough Investigation Permits the Decision Maker to Assess



"Relevant" Evidence

The Department declines to define "relevant", indicating that term "should be interpreted using [its] plain and ordinary meaning."

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Physical and mental health records and attorney-client privileged communications would fit within scope of this prohibition

Assessing Relevance Why Does it Matter?

Unsure about the relevance about a particular item of evidence? Ask the person who has proffered it.

Character Evidence

Polygraph evidence <

Opinion Evidence



Opinion Evidence

When might it be relevant?

How do you establish a foundation for opinion evidence so that the reliability of the opinion can be assessed?

Opinion Evidence: Try it!

You are investigating an allegation that Casey had sex with Taylor when Taylor was incapacitated. You interview several witnesses, one of whom made the following statement:

"I got to the party pretty late, and Taylor was already lit."

"Taylor was wasted. Like totally messed up. There is no way they could have given permission for sex"



Assessing Authenticity

Never assume that an

item of evidence is

authentic.

Investigating the products of the Investigation

Ask questions, request

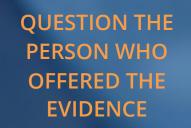
proof.

Investigate the authenticity if necessary.





Is it authentic?



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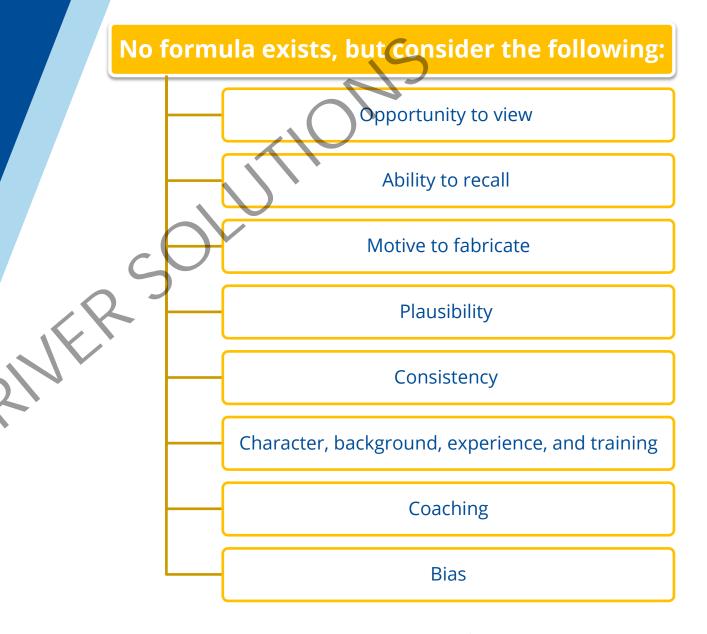


OBTAIN ORIGINALS FROM THE SOURCE HAVE OTHERS REVIEW AND COMMENT ON AUTHENTICITY

14

ARE THERE OTHER RECORDS THAT WOULD CORROBORATE?

Assessing Credibility and Reliability



Barriers to Evidence Collection

Non-Participating Parties

Uncooperative Witnesses

Uncooperative Advisors

Identity of party or witness unknown

Refusal to share materials

Materials lost or no longer accessible

Difficult topics

Barriers to Evidence Assessment

- Authenticity/Technology
- Colluding witnesses
- Colluding parties
- Totally different versions



02





The Case of Mary and John



The Investigative Report and Record

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03

At the conclusion of the investigation, we must create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

Relevancy Standard

Relevant Evidence

- "Evidence is relevant if:
- (a) it has any tendency to make a fact more or less probable than it would be without the evidence; and
- (b) the fact is of consequence in determining the action."

Irrelevant Evidence

- Prior sexual history of complainant, with two exceptions
- Legally recognized and unwaived privilege.
- Records related to medical, psychiatric, psychological treatment

Who Decides?

Department emphasizes repeatedly in Preamble that investigators have discretion to determine relevance

 Subject to parties' right to argue upon review of "directly related" evidence that certain information not included in investigative report is relevant and should be given more weight

Investigators will have to balance discretionary decisions not to summarize certain evidence in report against:

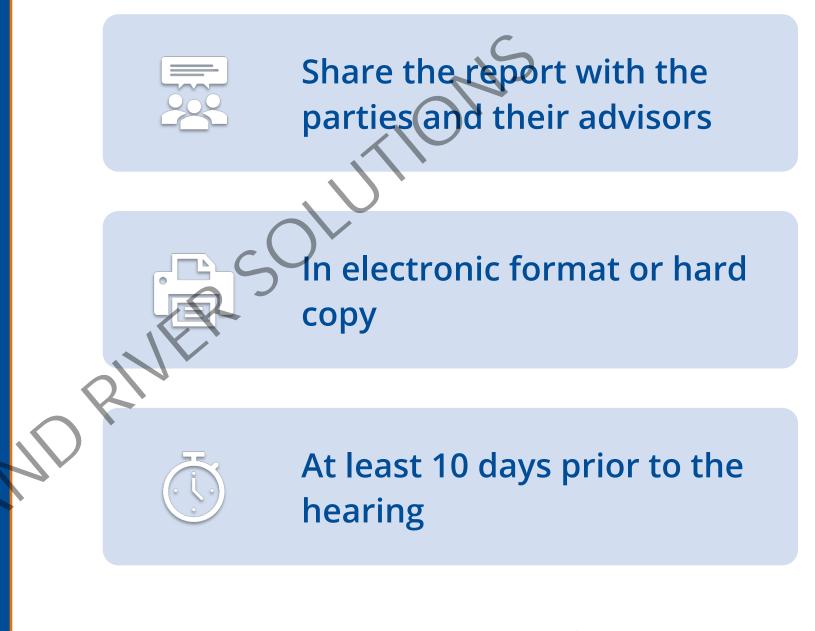
- Each party's right to argue their case, and
- Fact that decisions regarding responsibility will be made at hearing, not investigation stage



Redactions



Additional Requirements



The Purpose of the Reports

To allow for advance Review

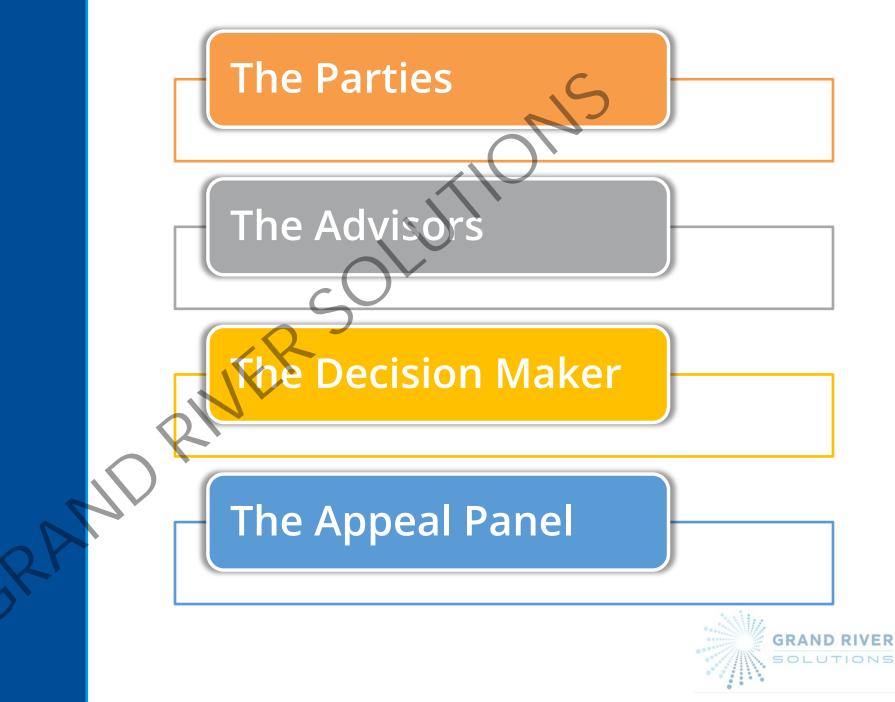
To allow for advance Preparation

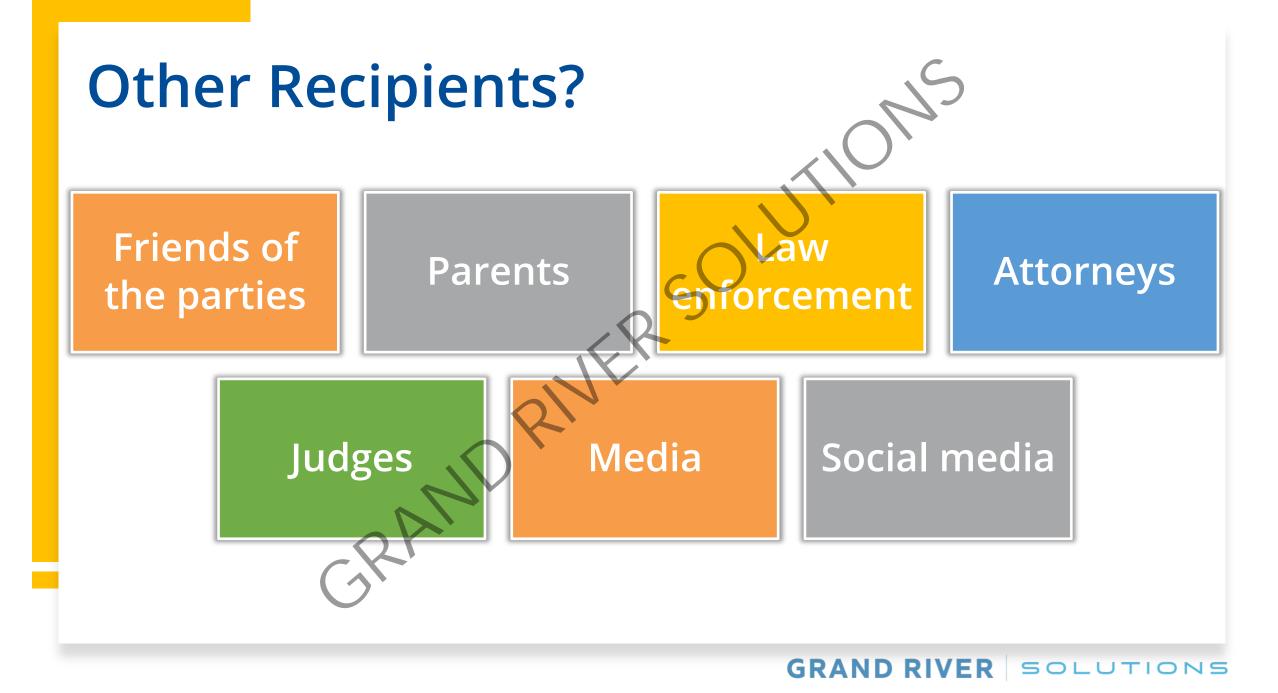
- By the Decision Maker
- By the Parties

Reduce likelihood of bias in final outcome



Intended Recipients



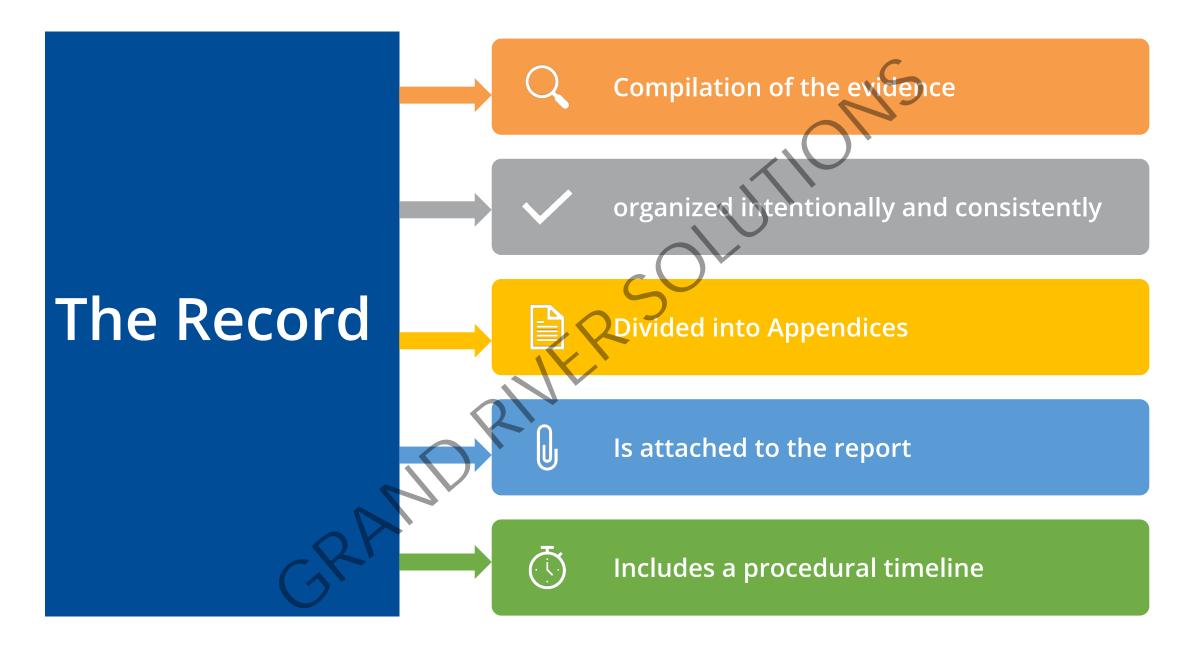


Essential Elements

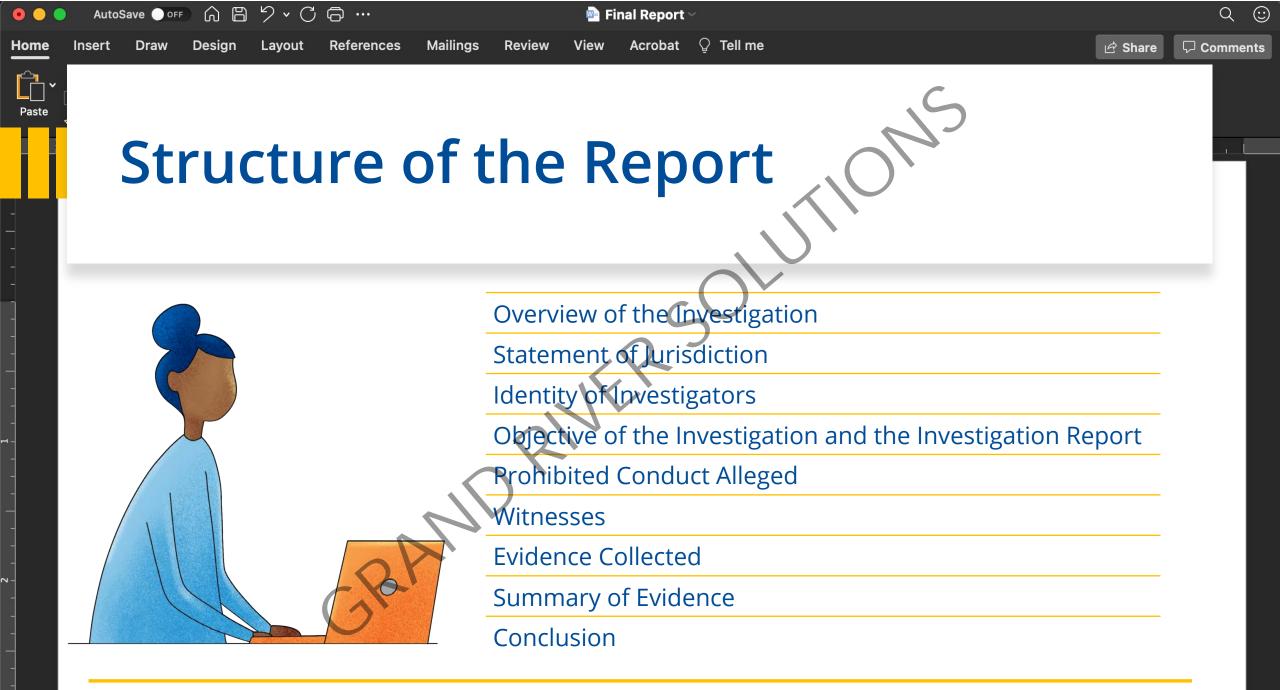








Examples of Appendices Appendix B: Appendix C: Appendix A: the remaining relevant witness testimony **Appendix D:** documentary evidence deemed only (e.g., evidence (e.g., text the procedural irrelevant, but transcripts, messages, SANE directly related to timeline statements the allegations in the reports, summaries, etc.) photographs, etc.) formal complaint GRAND RIVE



Mailings References Draw Design Layout

💼 Final Report 🖻

Q 😳

Comments

Share

♀ Tell me Review View Acrobat



Report Structure Overview

In this section, provide a very brief overview of the case. Include:

- the names of the parties, the applicable policy(ies)
- the prohibited conduct alleged,
- the date, time, and location of the conduct,
- a brief description of the alleged misconduct

Design

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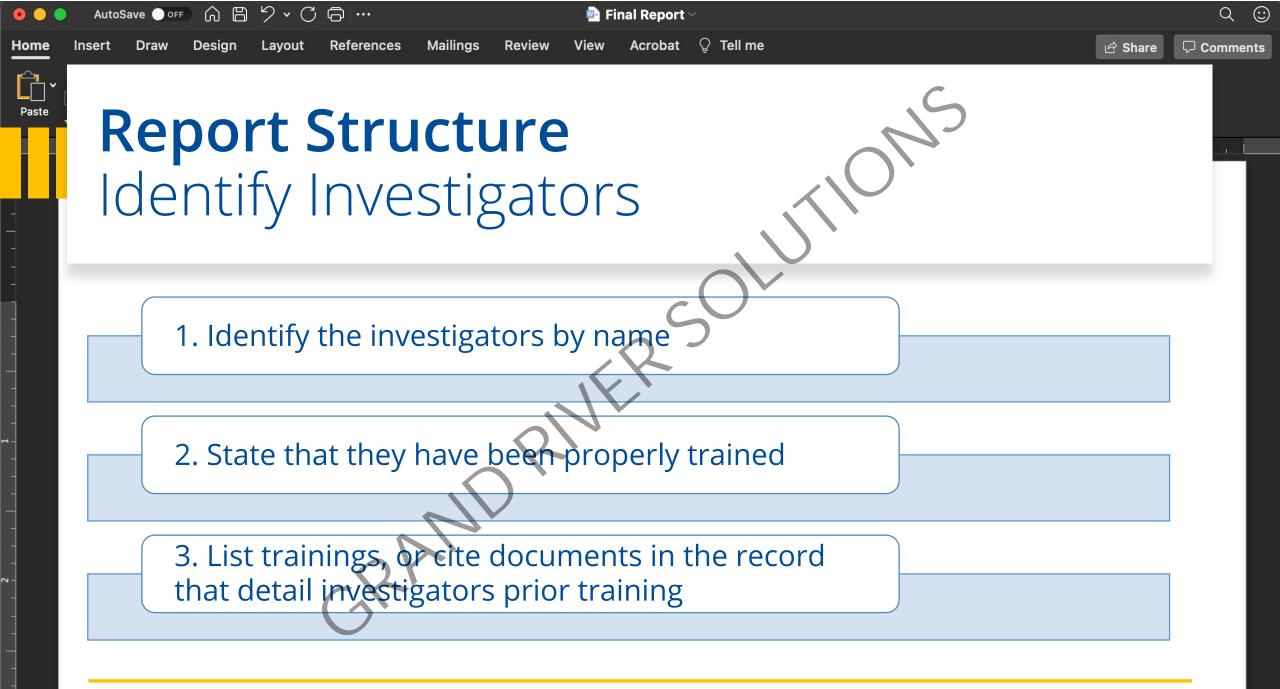


Home

Report Structure Statement of Jurisdiction

1. Cite Jurisdictional Elements

2. State all grounds for Jurisdiction





4. Describe the purpose of the report.

Layout

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Comments

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Report Structure Prohibited Conduct Alleged

1. List the allegations of prohibited conduct in the formal complaint.

2. Include definitions of prohibited conduct from institution's policy/procedures.

Home

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Report Structure List Witnesses

List those witnesses that were interviewed

List witnesses that were identified, but not interviewed

Simple List

Detailed List

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				• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
	Example of a Detailed List				
	Example of a Detailed List				
	Witness Name	Witness identified by:	Information offered		
-		withess identified by.	information onered		
	John Doe	Reporting Party	Mr. Doe is the Reporting Party's best frien the Reporting Party the night of the report		
	Jane Doe	Investigators	Jane Doe is the Responding Party's roomm believed that she saw the Reporting Party Responding Party's residence immediately reported incident.	leave the	

Design

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Q 😳

Comments

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References Mailings Review View Acrobat Q Tell me



Report Structure Evidence Collected

The final Title IX regulations require that <u>all</u> evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations in the formal complaint be shared with the parties and "made available at any hearing to give each party equal opportunity to refer to such evidence during the hearing including for the purposes of cross-examination."

In this section, list the Evidence or Refer to Appendices

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Q (:)

Comments

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References Mailings Review View Acrobat Q Tell me



Report Structure Summary of Evidence

In this section, include a summary of all relevant evidence. This section can be organized in several ways. It is important that, however organized, the evidence is summarized clearly and accurately, and without opinion or bias. In this section, the writer should cite the evidence and information in the Appendices. Paste

Report Structure Conclusion

In this section, summarize next steps in the process, including any procedural pre-requisites for moving the matter forward to a hearing. Q 😳

Comments

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Questions?



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