

Goal:
To provide officers with pertinent information about the occurrence of strangulation and highlight strangulation as a high indicator of lethality in order to strengthen response to this underreported crime.

Topic: Strangulation

Strangulation Facts

- Strangulation refers to external compression of the neck impeding blood flow and oxygen transport to or from the brain.
- Strangulation in VAW crimes is alarmingly high, yet documentation on police reports is extremely low.
- Strangulation has been identified as one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence.
- Injuries often appear to be mild with no visible marks, but internal damages which are not visible may progress to a fatal outcome.
- Unconsciousness may occur within seconds and death within minutes.
- Efforts should be made to investigate strangulation cases like an attempted homicide case.
- The odds of becoming an homicide victim increased by 800% for women who had been strangled by their partner.

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What other procedures need to be followed?

- Look for injuries behind the ears, all around the neck, chin, jaw, eyelids, shoulders and chest area.
- Be sure to take photographs of any visible injury however minor and describe injuries in report.
- Document and describe medical treatment that was offered or given to the victim.

What questions should you ask of victims to establish if strangulation occurred and gather the details?

1. Did the suspect put their hands/object on your neck?
2. If so, describe method. One or two hands? Forearm? Object?
3. What did the suspect say while strangling you?
4. Were you shaken simultaneously while being strangled? Describe.
5. How long did the suspect strangle you?
6. How many times were you strangled? Describe each incident and method.
7. Did you black out? Any light headedness?
8. Any difficulty breathing? Any complaint of a hoarse or raspy voice?
9. Any complaint of pain to throat, coughing, or trouble swallowing?
10. Did you vomit, urinate, or defecate as a result of being strangled?
11. Any prior incidents of strangulation?