




AUGUST 1, 2019

ILLUMINATIONS TRAINING EVALUATION

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA

COURTNEY PORTER, PHD & CATHERINE TODD
FAIRFAX COUNTY JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT



ILLUMINATIONS TRAINING REPORT

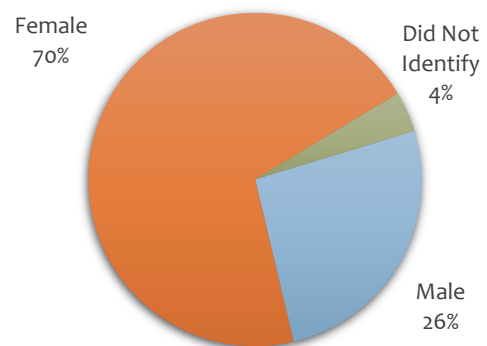
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Introduction

Two brothers, sexually abused by the same offender during their childhood, created the Illuminations portfolio containing artwork and written materials. The pieces of artwork address such questions as "What was this experience like for you?" The boys hoped that after viewing and exploring the art, participants would gain a richer understanding of how trauma affects an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards self and others, and thereby enabling the viewer to respond in a more empathic manner when working with victims of crime and their families.

Demographics

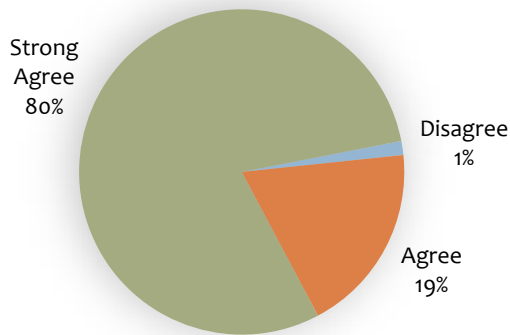
Eighty-one individuals participated in four different Illuminations Training events during fiscal years 2019. Ninety-five percent (n=77) of the total respondents completed the final evaluation after the training sessions. Work experience for respondents ranged between one month and 45 years, with an average of 16 years of work experience. Over 70 percent of surveyed participants were female. In addition, all but 1 respondent (99%), indicated they would recommend the training to their supervisor.



Evaluation Data

While much of the training focuses on the case of child sexual abuse; ideas, themes and concepts discussed during the training can assist participants in learning and understanding how trauma can affect individuals' and families' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. As many of our clients experience traumatic events during their lives, the concepts discussed during the training are translatable to our work with clients and families beyond "traditional" victims of crime. Participants responded using a 5-point scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree) to several questions regarding the presentation.

Better Theoretical Understanding



An overwhelming 99 percent of respondents indicated that the presentation provided them with a better theoretical understanding of the impact of trauma on victims of crime and their ability and/or willingness to interact and communicate with others. Responses for each question are included in the table below.

Table 1: Participant Responses for Questions on a 5 Point Scale					
	SD	D	U	A	SA
This presentation has provided me with a better empathic understanding of victims of child sexual abuse	0%	1%	0%	17%	82%
The presentation has provided me with a better empathic understanding of the complexity of the relationship between a victim of child sexual abuse and his/her perpetrator.	0%	1%	0%	13%	86%
This presentation has provided me with a better empathic understanding of families of child sexual abuse.	0%	1%	0%	18%	81%
This presentation has provided me with some practical strategies I can use to help improve the quality of my professional interactions with victims of child sexual abuse.	0%	0%	3%	34%	63%
This presentation has provided me with some practical strategies I can use to help improve the quality of my professional interactions with the families of child sexual abuse.	0%	1%	1%	34%	64%
This presentation has provided me with a better empathic understanding of the shared narratives between different kinds of crime victims	0%	1%	0%	26%	73%
This presentation has given me ideas on how I can improve my professional work with the victims and witnesses of crime.	0%	2%	0%	29%	69%

Participants responded to three questions using a 3-point scale (Less Helpful, As Helpful, More Helpful). Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that this presentation was more helpful than other presentations designed to assist in work with victims of child sexual abuse and their families.

Table 2: Participant Responses for Questions on a 3 Point Scale			
	LH	AH	MH
In comparison to other presentations designed to assist you in your professional work with victims of child sexual abuse, this presentation has been:	0%	17%	83%
In comparison to other presentations designed to assist you in your professional work with the families of child sexual abuse, this presentation has been:	0%	17%	83%
In comparison to other presentations designed to assist you in your professional work with victims and witnesses of crime (in general), this presentation has been:	0%	26%	74%

Respondents were asked in what ways do you think your experience in this workshop might affect your approach and work with victims of child abuse and their families in the future? Most responses included comments around being the importance of empathy when working with their clients and remembering why they are there. *“This training was a reminder of how vital our role is when working with victims who have experienced trauma. We play such a critical role & this training reviewed the impact of trauma. Victims need to be heard & safe & validated. Listening can go a long way.”* Other responses discussed the importance of being receptive during interactions with clients. *“Listen to the narratives. Remain patient. It’s their story, regardless if I’ve heard similar experiences. It’s not about you.”*

“It allowed me to see that trauma is very deep and that it can affect people in so many different ways.”

Illuminations Participant

“An incredible reminder that you cannot put grief, trauma, and healing on any kind of timeline and to be patient in your sharing space with someone in their journey.”

Illuminations Participant

Presenters asked in what ways did your experience in this workshop alter your perspective and/or understanding about victims of crime (in general), and how might you use this information in future interactions? Many participants indicated an increased awareness of the impact of traumatic events on victims and families. Again, other respondents discussed a renewed desire to listen, be open-

mindful, and show compassion. *“I learned that I have to be more empathetic, that victims and families (both) need to be heard, that the pain does not go away when the abuse stops, and that recovery is a never-ending journey.”*

Finally, respondents were asked what they liked best and/or least about the training session, and what recommendations would help improve either the content or delivery of the material? Responses were overwhelmingly positive regarding the presenter, content, and general delivery of the training. *“I absolutely loved the presentation. Presenter was very knowledgeable, perfect tone of voice to keep people engaged & interactive.” “This was extremely informative. The instructor was passionate about the subject. I will remember the story of the boys and apply what I've learned.”* There were a few requests to see more pieces from the boys’ art portfolio, as well as a few requests that the presentation be longer, and become a mandatory class. Many participants discussed how important the training was for them personally, and their careers. *“This presentation was very heavy but was needed for the type of work that we do.”*

“Work to listen with empathy and understand their narrative.”

Illuminations Participant

Trainer Bio:

[Heather Pfeifer, Ph.D.](#), is the director of the M.S. in Criminal Justice Program at the University of Baltimore. Her research interests center around child victimization, juvenile delinquency and developing new teaching pedagogies for criminal justice students. Dr. Pfeifer has published in the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, the *Justice Policy Journal* and the *Encyclopedia of Criminal Justice* and written numerous chapters in *The Victims Assistance Provider’s Handbook*, the curriculum manual for the Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland. In addition to facilitating the Illuminations Curriculum, Dr. Pfeifer has served as a consultant for federal and state agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, the Circuit Court for Baltimore City Family Division/Juvenile Docket and the Prince George’s County Office of the Sheriff. Please contact her at hpfeifer@ubalt.edu.