
Non-Fatal Strangulation: A Lethal Form of Interpersonal Violence

“Choking”, or strangulation, is an act of violence frequently used to control and overpower a victim, and has recently been recognized as a particularly lethal form of interpersonal violence. This seminar will explore the physiological effects of strangulation, signs and symptoms, and medical evaluation of these patients. Written and photo documentation will be discussed, as well as the importance of collaboration between health care and law enforcement to improve patient safety. An assistant prosecutor will discuss how to improve the investigation and prosecution of strangulation cases for law enforcement professionals.

This seminar is focused on the team approach to addressing strangulation, and will provide valuable knowledge for nurses, physicians, emergency medical services, social workers, advocates, law enforcement and prosecutors.

Presentations can be tailored to the needs of the audience.

Health care audience:

1-hour presentation covers

- The awareness of non-fatal strangulation as a serious form of violence.
- Identification and documentation of injuries

2- 3 hour presentation

- Current research on strangulation
- Physiological effects of strangulation injuries
- Signs and symptoms of strangulation
- Identification and documentation of injuries
- Medical evaluation of patients with strangulation injuries
- Courtroom testimony

Multidisciplinary audience of health care and law enforcement professionals:

5-hour presentation includes

- Current research on strangulation as a lethal form of violence
- Physiological effects of strangulation injuries
- Signs and symptoms of strangulation
- Identification and documentation of injuries
- Medical evaluation of patients with strangulation injuries
- Team approach to investigating and prosecuting strangulation cases
- Case scenarios: The importance of documentation from initial report to the courtroom

Speakers

Ruth Downing MSN RN CNP SANE-A

Ruth is currently a family nurse practitioner in an Urgent Care setting. She has been a registered nurse for over 30 years, and a forensic nurse since 1999, with experience in critical care and emergency nursing. Ruth has been active in county, state, and national efforts addressing violence in our communities and has appeared as an expert witness in the areas of domestic violence, sexual assault and strangulation.

Ruth initiated and directed a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program for seven years. She is an active member of the Ohio Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses, serving as President in 2008. She is also a member of the Central Ohio Rescue & Restore Coalition, the Ohio Sexual Assault Task Force, the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence steering committee, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, the Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses, and the Delaware County Medical Reserve Corps.

Among her other accomplishments, Ruth has authored "Manual and Ligature Strangulation" for On the Edge, and has presented at the International Association of Forensic Nurses Scientific Assembly, the National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence, and to health care and law enforcement professionals nationally and internationally. She has provided education on sexual assault, domestic violence and strangulation to nurses, physicians, law enforcement, social workers, parents, grand juries, and others.

Marianne Hemmeter JD

Marianne Hemmeter is Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Delaware County, Ohio where she currently prosecutes all types of felony offenses, including sexual assault, felony domestic violence cases, felonious assaults, child endangering, murder and aggravated murder. She has provided trainings for both law enforcement and forensic nurses on the importance of their roles in crimes of violence. Marianne Hemmeter received a BA in History from Trinity College in Washington D.C. in 1994, and a JD from Ohio State University College of Law in 1997.