

Course Title:	Cold Case Safety Net: Missing and Unidentified Persons
Type of Course:	On-Demand Web-based training
Course Length:	Approximately 60 minutes
Subject Matter Experts:	Ms. B.J. Spamer and Mr. George Adams
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Course Information

Description

This course is designed for all agencies, regardless of size, which handle long-term missing and unidentified decedent cases. This course will provide an efficient and effective four-step process to initially address all missing and unidentified cold cases uniformly, and ensure that investigators receive maximum benefits of database searching and outside resources with a minimal initial effort. Once an initial cold case safety net response is complete, traditional cold case selection factors can be applied to prioritize cases for further investigative response. This course will be delivered in a Web-based on-demand format which will allow participants flexibility in scheduling this training.

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

None required. Taking the course *Developing a Missing Persons Protocol* first is recommended.

Instructor Qualifications:

B.J. Spamer joined the University of North Texas Center for Human Identification in 2010 as a Program Manager in the Forensic Services Unit (FSU). She has worked as an intelligence analyst and spent eight years with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), where she provided investigative support to long-term missing and unidentified deceased child cases. She managed the NCMEC's nationwide DNA collection program in conjunction with the University of North Texas. She also participated in the National Missing & Unidentified Person System (NamUs) working group and served as a NCMEC liaison to NamUs for two years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Behavioral and Social Sciences from the University of Maryland and a Master's Degree in Forensic Science from the George Washington University.

Officer G.W. Adams holds an Advanced Police Officer Certification and was awarded the Academic Achievement Award. He has an active commission with the University of North Texas Health Science Center Police Department. Officer Adams has been with the University of North Texas Health Science Center since 2005 and he currently functions as a Program Manager for the Forensic Services Unit. He served on the NamUs Advisory Group and often speaks as a leading advocate for law enforcement officers. Prior to joining the UNT Center for Human Identification, Officer Adams was the Chief Financial Officer of AMF-Playcenter, S.A. in Brazil and Argentina; Controller of AMF Limitada; and International Financial Manager for AMF Bowling Worldwide. Officer Adams retired early from Mobil Corporation after 23 years, with extensive experience in the Planning and Financial Analysis Unit of U.S. Marketing and Refining. While working as a Patrol Officer with the Ft. Worth Police Department, Officer Adams earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from the University of North Texas.

Learning Objectives/Outcomes

This course will cover an efficient and effective four-step process to an initial cold case missing or unidentified person response. The material in this course provides suggestions to create a “safety net” that will ensure all cold cases receive the maximum benefit of database searching and outside assistance, with minimal initial effort by law enforcement. Once the initial Safety Net response is complete, investigators can apply traditional cold case selection criteria to determine the order in which cases will receive additional attention.

Upon completing this course, the participant should be able to:

- Understand how public records database searches can help locate voluntary missing persons and validate missing person reports.
- Understand why missing persons must be entered into NCIC and NamUs.
- Identify the benefits of having family members of missing persons use NamUs.
- Understand the “best practices” that will maximize DNA comparisons and searching in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS).
- Understand how errors or incomplete data in missing/unidentified cases can impede associations and how the application of the Cold Case Safety Net can overcome those issues.

Outline

1. Introduction
 - 1.1. What is the Safety Net model
2. Overview of the missing and unidentified problem
 - 2.1. Missing person statistics
 - 2.2. Unidentified person statistics
 - 2.3. 2004 Bureau of Justice Statistics findings
3. Traditional cold case selection criteria
4. Four-step Safety Net response
 - 4.1. Public records database searches
 - 4.1.1. Reasons for public records database searches
 - 4.1.2. Choosing a public records database vendor
 - 4.1.3. Public records database source data
 - 4.1.4. Search tips
 - 4.2. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) entry and searching
 - 4.2.1. Purposes of missing person NCIC entries
 - 4.2.2. Minimum data entry requirements
 - 4.2.3. Entering unidentified records for medical examiners/coroners
 - 4.3. National Missing & Unidentified Person System (NamUs) entry and searching
 - 4.3.1. NamUs overview

- 4.3.2. Restricted data in NamUs
- 4.3.3. Encouraging families to use NamUs
- 4.3.4. Advanced searching and other functions
- 4.3.5. Using NamUs as a permanent record repository
- 4.4. DNA sample submission
 - 4.4.1. DNA/CODIS “best practices”
 - 4.4.1.1. Using multiple DNA technologies
 - 4.4.1.2. Laboratories with dedicated missing/identified sections
 - 4.4.1.3. Removing profiles only when all remains are recovered
 - 4.4.1.4. Obtaining multiple family reference samples for optimal searching
 - 4.4.1.5. Taking advantage of the proactive searching capabilities of CODIS
 - 4.4.2. DNA sample submission criteria
 - 4.4.3. Obtaining family reference collection kits
- 5. Case studies/illustration of missing/identified data issues
 - 5.1. Errors or inaccuracies in missing/identified data
 - 5.1.1. Date of last contact errors
 - 5.1.2. Dental coding errors
 - 5.2. Bernard Wilson case study
 - 5.2.1. Lack of missing person report
 - 5.2.2. Using forensic art to prompt investigative leads
 - 5.2.3. Proactive DNA collections resulting in cold DNA hits

Suggested Readings/Texts

None.

Grading / Documentation of Attendance

This course is not graded. Documentation of attendance in the form of a certificate that can be printed or saved will be unlocked when you have completed all of the required training content. RTI International will preserve your attendance record if you need to access it or provide proof of training at a later date.

Course Evaluation

An online instructional assessment form will be made available for your confidential use at the end of the module. Any feedback you provide will inform RTI and NIJ of methods to improve the program.

Forensic Science Education Program Policies

Use of On-Demand Modules: On-demand modules are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access to the modules is provided for free to registered users. The registration system can be accessed at www.rti.org/forensiced. Once registration is complete a link to the actual learning module will be provided via email. Use that link to log in and view the learning module. If you need assistance with logging in please use the forms provided at the login screen, email us at cfs-forensic-ed@rti.org or during business hours call the Center for Forensic Sciences at 1-866-252-8415.

Technical Requirements

The learning modules contain audio, video, animation, graphics, and file sharing which are best experienced over a high speed Internet connection. In addition to a confident level of computer and Internet literacy, certain minimum technical requirements must be met to enable a successful learning experience. Please review the important technical requirements and web browser configuration information available [here](https://rti.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm) . (https://rti.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm). Note that this linked page contains a utility to test your computer for the minimum system requirements. Considerable beta testing of each module is implemented as a quality assurance measure in this program. While technical difficulties may still occur; please be aware of the following information:

Do not use the “Back Button” on your browser

The “back button” should disappear when you enter this on-demand module. However, some browser configurations will continue to display this control. If you see this button, do not use it. When viewing an on-demand module use the navigation pane. Use of the navigation pane is explained in the beginning of the course.

Server Unavailability/Other Technical Difficulties

RTI International is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. Students should report any problems to the email cfs-forensic-ed@rti.org or call the Center for Forensic Sciences at 1-866-252-8415.

Customer Service will respond to participants request at the earliest possible time during the next working day. CFS staff will be available from 8:15 AM – 5:00 PM ET Monday through Friday.