



Evening Session - 2015

ES1 Forensic Sciences — Keep It Simple, Stupid!

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After attending this presentation, attendees will learn a simple paradigm to balance four key elements of practice in order to enhance opportunities for a long-term, successful career.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing a memorable framework to balance the critical areas of education, analysis, reporting/testimony, and ethics.

The career of the forensic science practitioner is arduous. Reflection and simplification may prove beneficial in coping with the myriad stresses inherent in the profession. The requisite training is intellectually challenging, often continuing into graduate and postgraduate studies. Continuing education is essential to stay current with the latest scientific developments and techniques, in addition to exploring potential new research in order to develop improved procedures and protocols. Application of the knowledge base in investigating a particular event is a daily exercise for the forensic caseworker, regardless of discipline.

The awesome responsibility imposed by applying precise analytical methodology while maintaining scientific objectivity which must be balanced with the reality of the significance of the results can prove burdensome. Eventually, the results of the forensic analysis will yield a scientific report which is often presented in court. Sharing the vast wealth of background information with a lay jury by means of unbiased reports and courtroom testimony is an oft underappreciated skill. The convergence of presenting detailed science with conveyance of the essential data while maintaining neutrality requires both sophistication and simplification in communication. Finally, given the gravity of the consequences of the adversarial system and the inherent nature of the casework, the forensic scientist experiences profound ethical challenges during the course of a career. Those successful in the long term are careful to pay heed to the needs of the individual human spirit. Diversions and moderation can help balance the ethics of personal and professional life in order to maximize the individual's potential for overall success.

Thus, the four cornerstones of knowledge, investigation, sharing, and spirit are the bedrock upon which a successful career in the forensic sciences can be structured. Utilizing an entertaining multimedia format, the panel will discuss each of these four elements in order to demonstrate how each might be integrated into a successful whole. These lessons will no doubt prove beneficial to attendees at all points on the career path, from novice to retiree. Ultimately, the foundation will remind all that a successful mantra for forensics is easy to remember — keep it simple, stupid!

Ethics, Testimony, Analysis