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Inter-Agency Response to Domestic Violence in a Medium Size City



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June 2003

**Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Community Policing/Domestic Violence Test Site Project:**

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in a Medium Sized City**

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Prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Award #98DVWXXK015

June 2002

Table of Contents

	Pages
List of Tables	ii-iii
List of Figures	iv
List of Maps	v
Chapter	
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Methodology.....	4
3 Literature Review: Evolution of Domestic Violence as a Policy Issue, and History of Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Response	11
4 History of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee: 1987-2000	28
5 The Current State of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee: 2000-2001	57
Chapter 5 Appendix: Recommendations for Police Department Responses to Personal Violence between Intimates	
6 Police Use of Dual Arrest in Intimate Assault Cases	85
Chapter 6 Appendix A: Data Cleaning Table	
Chapter 6 Appendix B: Table of Data Used for Analysis in Columns	
Chapter 6 Appendix C: Table of Data Used for Analysis in Rows	
7 Mapping Reported Intimate Assaults.....	139

List of Tables

Page

Chapter 2

Table 1: Interviewees' Agency Affiliations and Domestic Violence Related Job Functions	6
--	---

Chapter 4

Table 1: Changes in Agency Policies and Procedures, c. 1991	41
---	----

Chapter 5

Table 1: Domestic Violence Service Delivery Community	62
Table 2: Number of Reported Working Relationships by Agency	72

Chapter 6

Table 1: Demographic Comparison between the Population of the City and the Population of Reported Intimate Assaults	96
Table 2: Distribution of Police Outcomes	97
Table 3: Victim-Offender Relationship by Race of Offender	101
Table 4: Relationship, Offender's Presence, and Arrest by Race	102
Table 5: Offender's Prior Intimate Violence Arrests	104
Table 6: Offender Substance Use	106
Table 7: Weapon Use	107
Table 8: Offense Alleged by Victim	107
Table 9: Evidence Collected	109
Table 10: Dependent Variable: Dual Arrest	113
Table 11: Dependent Variable: Emergency Protective Order Obtained	114

Table 12: Dependent Variable: Evidence Collected.....	116
---	-----

Chapter 7

Table 1: Correlation Between Number of Reported Incidents and Percent of Black and White in Block Group	164
--	-----

List of Figures

Page

Chapter 4

Figure 1: Characterization of the History of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC): 1987-2001.....	35
Figure 2: Laycock and Webb’s Typology of Early Partnership Pitfalls	51
Figure 3: Inter-Agency ‘Tipping Point’ Factors	53

Chapter 5

Figure 1: The Domestic Violence Service Community	64
Figure 2: Police-Community Domestic Violence Working Relationships	71

Chapter 6

Figure 1: Police Outcome by Race of Offender.....	99
---	----

List of Maps

Page

Chapter 7

Map 1: Patrol Divisions and their Characteristics	148
Maps 2 and 3: Kernel Density of Reported Simple and Aggravated Intimate Assault per Square Mile.....	151
Map 4: Frequency of Reported Intimate Assault by Block Group	154
Map 5: Rate of Reported Intimate Assault by Block Group.....	156
Map 6: Reported Intimate Assault and Population Density by Block Group.....	159
Maps 5 and 7: Rate of Reported Intimate Assault and Median Rent by Block Group	161
Maps 5 and 8: Rate of Reported Intimate Assault and Racial Homogeneity by Block Group.....	163
Maps 9 and 10: Proportion of Reported Offending to Population by Race.....	167
Map 11: Kernel Density of Reported Intimate Assaults with Police Stations and Medical Facilities.....	170

Chapter 1: Introduction

Inter-agency work is a key feature of many crime prevention and community safety efforts and part of the foundation of modern policing. No longer is crime control viewed as solely the purview of the police, but rather as an outcome for which many agencies share responsibility. As acceptance of this idea has increased, inter-agency collaborative efforts have multiplied. Nowhere have these coordinated community crime control efforts been more fully recognized and advanced than in efforts to address domestic violence.

The present study examines one city's efforts to reduce domestic violence through the coordinated work of the city police department and a wide range of criminal justice, social services, and community agencies. The city (here, and throughout this report, anonymous) is in the mid-Atlantic region of the country, has approximately 200,000 residents, and a police department with approximately 700 police officers. This research entailed study of an inter-agency domestic violence coalition, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC), as well as two separate exploratory analyses of the city police department's domestic violence data.

After presenting the methodology and literature review, the findings of this study are presented in two parts. The first part pertains to the history and current state of the DVCC and includes Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 is a description of the inception of DVCC and its evolution up until the year 2000 when the field research for this project began. Chapter 5 is a description of the DVCC at the time of the field research, a description of the domestic violence service community of which the DVCC is a part, a discussion of the perspectives about the police department expressed by members of the domestic violence service community, and a list of

recommendations for improving police response to domestic violence developed by the Police Foundation.

The second part is comprised of Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 is an analysis of the practice known as dual arrest, where police officers arrest both parties in an intimate assault. This exploratory analysis includes comparisons among cases resulting in issuance of a warrant, single arrest, and dual arrest as well as logistic regression analysis testing the relationship between case characteristics and dual arrest. Chapter 7 explores the utility of spatially analyzing reported intimate assault data by using several different methods to map these crimes and compare geographic patterns to neighborhood demographic characteristics.

Because this report covers a wide range of topics within the broad area of domestic violence, it is written so that each chapter ties in with the others, but contains a distinct qualitative or quantitative analysis that can be read separately. For this reason, each chapter includes its own conclusions, references, and in some cases summaries of relevant literature. Therefore, except for a general summary of literature on inter-agency domestic violence work, there are no overall summaries of literature, references, or conclusions.

The concern of this project is violence committed against one member of a current or past intimate couple by the other, which we refer to as intimate violence. “Domestic violence” is a broader term used to describe intimate violence as well as violence between non-intimate familial or household members. In the chapters summarizing literature and describing the DVCC, we use the term “domestic violence,” because this is a term conventionally used by inter-

agency approaches; but regardless of the term used, throughout this report, our subject is intimate violence.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Overview of Methodologies

This study was conducted between February 2000 and June 2001, and involved collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Part one of this report presents the qualitative findings about the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC) and the domestic violence service delivery community. The following section describes the methodology used to gather these data and construct these chapters. Part two of this report contains two separate quantitative analyses. The methodology of each is included in its respective chapter.

The data collection process for constructing a thorough view of the DVCC and of the domestic violence service community took place between February 2000 and June 2001, and involved the collection of historical information about the period between 1986, a date slightly before the birth of the DVCC, to early 2001.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative data were gathered using four methods. The first was reviewing literature on inter-agency domestic violence response. The second was observational field research, namely attendance at DVCC meetings, ride-alongs with police patrols, a limited amount of observation of the domestic violence court docket, and two ‘focus group’ interviews, each with four police patrol officers and supervisors. The third was examination of historical documentation relating to inter-agency work in the city, such as meeting minutes, press releases, and newspaper articles. The fourth, and primary method, was conducting in-depth interviews with officials from

agencies across the city involved in domestic violence service delivery (see Table 1 for list of interviewees).

Although the majority of the field research was completed between February 2000 and June 2001, the research began in August 1999 when Police Foundation researchers began attending the monthly DVCC meetings. Attendance continued until June 2001. Attending meetings served many benefits. It allowed researchers to gain knowledge about the DVCC's background and current role in the domestic violence service delivery community, facilitated development of an interviewee list, and allowed researchers to develop a rapport with many DVCC members.

In-depth interviews to capture the history of events and institutions have a rich pedigree, and have been the chosen method for a range of studies of the police and police work (e.g. Brookman, Noaks, & Wincup, 1999; Huggins, 1998; Fletcher, 1991; Fletcher, 1995; Websdale, 1992; Weinberger, 1995; Wells & Triplett, 1992). Because the current study examines major events and occurrences relating to the DVCC, rather than the minutiae of individual actions and conversations, there is good reason to believe that the events portrayed here are reliable.

Table 1. Interviewees' Agency Affiliations and Domestic Violence Related Job Functions

Interviewee's Agency	Interviewee's Title, or Domestic Violence Related Job Function
State Dept. of Health	<i>Works with localities to form and monitor fatality review teams.</i>
Domestic Violence Interventions	<i>Founder and director of organization that provides counseling for batterers and monitors batterers' compliance with court ordered treatment.</i>
Hospital Emergency Room	Nurse: provides emergency medical services to victims of domestic violence.
Campus Sexual Assault Program	Assists students who have been sexually assaulted and promotes sexual assault awareness and education to the campus community.
Battered Womens' Shelter (BWS)	Directs battered women's shelter.
Magistrate's Office	Directs agency that issues warrants and emergency protective orders.
Office of State's Attorney	Attorney: prosecutes domestic violence cases.
Victim Witness	Supervises unit that provides court information and accompaniment to victims.
Legal Aid	Attorney: provides legal services to domestic violence victims on civil matters.
Catholic Charities	Facilitates batterer groups for organization that provides a variety of service, including counseling services to victims and perpetrators, and emergency food and clothing.
Department of Social Services (DSS)	Supervises all DSS direct service units.
Family Violence Prevention Program/Department of Social Services (FVPP)	Provides counseling and a variety of direct services to domestic violence victims.
Family Violence Prevention Program/Department of Social Services (FVPP)	Places and monitors batterers referred by court to batterer intervention programs and other programs as necessary.
Family Violence Prevention Program/Department of Social Services (FVPP)	Supervises unit that counsels and provides direct service to domestic violence victims.
Domestic Violence Responders/Department of Social Services	Supervisors DSS unit that responds to domestic violence calls in tandem with police to assist domestic violence victims obtain information about and services from Social Services.
Campus police from local university	Supervises the department's response to domestic violence calls on and in vicinity of campus.
Local agency that conducts research and training in criminal justice topics.	Provides training in domestic violence to officers locally and throughout the state.
City Police Department	Chief.
City Police Department	Assistant Chief.
City Police Department	Detective: supervises Youth and Family Crimes Unit.
City Police Department	Detective located in Youth and Family Crimes Unit.
City Police Department	Sergeant acting unofficially as domestic violence point person.
Neighboring city's police department	Chief: provided historical information about the inception and early period of the DVCC.
City government	Mayor.
County domestic violence resource center	Interviewee provided historical information about the inception and early period of the DVCC.
Additional personnel	Interviewee was original DVCC coordinator and provides historical information about the inception and early period of the DVCC.

The synthesized history presented here was formed from multiple interviews covering the same topics and events, allowing for any clear contradictions to be identified and resolved. There were no such contradictions with respect to any major historical events, although as would be expected, interviewees expressed differing interpretations of and reactions to these events. This is normal in this type of research and there is every reason to believe that what follows is a reliable portrayal of events.

Twenty-four in person and two phone interviews were conducted. As the interviews were semi-structured in format, they varied in length depending upon the particular respondent (i.e., some interviewees had more to say than others). Most interviews took at least one hour, the median was approximately two hours, and the longest interview lasted almost four hours. As with most research of this nature, a significant amount of time was spent scheduling interviews, following-up and rescheduling cancelled interviews, and completing partial interviews when it was impossible to complete the interview in one session. With one exception, all persons on the interview list were successfully interviewed.

Between its inception in 1987 and this study, the DVCC's membership had been reconstituted many times; thus, interviewing only present members would not provide the information necessary to produce a complete review of the DVCC's complicated history. Since the study sought to capture many perspectives of the coalition and its history, present members from a variety of agencies were interviewed, as were past DVCC members who were no longer city residents. The latter were identified as part of a snowball sampling technique in which individuals were added to the interviewee list if they were frequently mentioned by other

interviewees as being instrumental in past phases of the DVCC.¹ Several individuals were interviewed whose agencies were conspicuously absent from the DVCC even though their agency had a clear role in domestic violence service delivery.

A central aim of the present study being to identify the role, activities and working relationships of the police, eight of the 26 interviewees were from local police agencies. This included officers from the city police department as well as officers from the campus police department of a local university. Information about current practices and activities of the police was gleaned from interviewees, ride-alongs in patrol cars, frequent contact with police personnel, and two focus groups, with four personnel each. The focus groups were conducted in two of the four police precincts. One focus group included supervisors as well as officers, and one consisted only of officers.

Developing and Piloting the Interview Instrument

The interview instrument was developed to capture information on interviewees' experiences with and opinions about domestic service delivery in the city, emphasizing views on the police.² Questions pertaining to the historical evolution of the DVCC were asked to interviewees who were knowledgeable about its early period. Also captured were subjects' views of the police response to domestic violence in the city, the police department's role in inter-agency work (including the DVCC), and interviewees' impressions and experiences about working with the

¹ Snowballing is a nonprobability sampling technique typically used when the sampling frame is unknown and members can be difficult to locate. One interviewee provides information that leads to another, so that, like a snowball rolling down a hill, the sample gathers size and momentum as the research progresses (Babbie, 1998).

² We thank Jane Sadusky of the Battered Women's Project in Minnesota, for useful comments and suggestions during the instrument design stage.

police department. The instrument contains seven sections. These are outlined below, along with an overview of the sub-topics covered in each section:

1. *Interviewee's background in domestic violence work* (e.g., how long has interviewee been involved with domestic violence work, in what capacity is interviewee involved, and how does interviewee's role fit into the city's service delivery system).
2. *Interviewee's agency's involvement with domestic violence collaboration in general, through the DVCC, and with the police* (e.g., what role does interviewee's agency play in domestic violence service delivery, which if any agencies partner, or should partner with interviewee's, does, and if so, how, does interviewee's agency partner with police, and what are positive and negative aspects of police partnerships).
3. *Interviewee's involvement with the DVCC* (e.g., to what extent, if any, does interviewee participate in the DVCC, and what is the nature of involvement).
4. *Interviewee's knowledge of DVCC's history* (e.g., interviewee's knowledge and perspective of the evolution of the DVCC, reasons for its decline, and whether interviewee feels the resurged DVCC will avoid past pitfalls).
5. *Interviewee's perceptions of the current DVCC* (e.g., what does interviewee feel are the positive and negative aspects to the current DVCC, does interviewee feel DVCC is meeting victims' needs, and does interviewee feel DVCC is inclusive of member feedback).
6. *Interviewee's knowledge of and opinions about collaborative approaches to domestic violence* (e.g., what inter-agency collaborations is interviewee aware of in the city, does interviewee believe collaborative approaches to domestic violence are effective).

7. *Interviewee's views of domestic violence services in the city* (e.g., how does the interviewee feel the city addresses domestic violence effectively, what improvements need to be made, and has the presumptive arrest policy had a positive or negative effect on victims).

The instrument contained 67 separate questions, most of which were open ended. It was pre-tested with three interviewees, which led to several modifications before being fielded with the remaining interviewees. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manor, allowing the interviewer to emphasize the topics most relevant to each interviewee's position and experience. This allowed the quality and quantity of the information obtained from each interview to be maximized. For instance, although derived from the same interview schedule, the interview with the city mayor had a different emphasis than that with the police detective. All but one interview was conducted by the same interviewer.

Chapter 3

Review of Literature: Evolution of Domestic Violence as a Policy Issue, and History of Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Response

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Prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Award #98DVWXK015

June 2002

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Recognition of Domestic Violence as a Public Policy Concern

Historically, society tolerated and condoned men's violence against women in intimate relationships. It was not until the end of the 19th century that "chastisement" could no longer be used as an acceptable defense to a charge of assault on a woman. Three states adopted anti-wife beating laws at that time, making it an offense punishable at the whipping post. Such laws were generally in name only, as they were infrequently and unequally enforced. When enforcement did occur, the sanctions imposed were mostly deployed against those on the fringes of society; usually blacks, vagrants, and the poor (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990; Melton, 1999).

By the beginning of the 20th century, the 48 American states as well as most of the Western countries had adopted legislation that outlawed wife beating. Through the 1960s and 1970s, social mores kept the unspoken approval of violence toward women intact, and nowhere was this more evident than in the "hands off" policy of the criminal justice system (Pence, 1996; Stelans & Lurigio, 1995). Police typically were reluctant to respond to domestic violence calls, and such calls were considered a low priority. When they did respond, an arrest was not likely to occur, as the most common law enforcement response was to separate the parties temporarily, or the use of advisement to restore peace and order. Officers felt it was not their business to interfere with family matters, and most felt that doing so was not real police work. Arrest and prosecution of offenders was generally viewed as a waste of time (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1990; Bryger & Edleson, 1987; Cordner, Gaines & Kappler, 1996; and Parnas, 1971). Courts often trivialized the victim's experience, dismissing cases and giving lighter sentences to batterers than offenders who

committed violent crimes against strangers. Use of these practices meant batterers were very rarely held accountable for their actions, thus perpetuating acceptance of violence against women (Davis & Smith, 1995).

The women's movement in the 1970s brought the issue of domestic violence to the forefront as a social concern. Grassroots battered women's programs had already begun advocating for victims of domestic violence, providing them with safety and openly criticizing the ineffectual policies of the criminal justice system. The first hotline for these victims was set up in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1971. The very first shelter for battered women opened in Chiswick, England, in 1972, with the first American shelter opening shortly thereafter in Pasadena, California (Pence, 1996; Steinman, 1990). Activists continued to open shelters, counsel victims and batterers, and educate the public about domestic violence, all of which led to heightened public awareness of the problem and a push to criminalize battering. The pressure was on both legislators and police to find and implement more effective solutions.

Providing female victims of battering with shelter and access to available legal recourse continued to be the prime intervention strategies through the late 1970s. Demands for policy changes continued, most of them directed at the police because of their role as the first responders to battering incidents. Although police departments began to train officers in mediation of family violence, these incidents still were not treated as crimes, as police rarely made arrests. Advocates called for more attention and sensitivity for victims from the police, and for a response that would hold batterers accountable for their actions (Jolin & Moose, 1997; Steinman, 1990).

While many states enacted domestic violence statutes, police departments were resistant to the changes. The early 1980s brought several civil liability cases against police departments for their ineffective response to domestic violence calls. *Thurman et al. v. City of Torington* (1984) was the first case to find the police liable for failure to provide equal protection of the law guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. At the same time, Sherman & Berk (1984) published a landmark study indicating that arresting batterers was the most effective response to domestic violence calls, as it served as a deterrent to subsequent attacks. The groundbreaking findings of the Police Foundation, Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment concurred with the publication of the U.S. Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence report (1984) urging police to treat domestic assault as a crime. Legal requirements that limited officers from making warrantless arrests for misdemeanors they did not see were abolished. In response to the mounting political pressure, and with uncharacteristic speed, many police departments in the 1980s adopted presumptive or mandatory arrest policies for misdemeanor domestic violence assaults. Feminist and battered women's groups lauded the change in policies, and these events gained recognition for domestic violence as a public policy concern (Gelles, 1993; Steinman, 1990).

The Rise of Interagency Crime Prevention Work

Despite later findings of several replication studies indicating that arrest alone was not a deterrent to continued domestic violence (see Dunford, Huizinga, & Elliott, 1990; Hirschell, Hutchinson, Dean, Kelley, & Pesackis, 1990), the tide had already turned. Increasing numbers of police departments continued to institute pro-arrest policies. Even so, a vicious cycle of

ineffectual procedures continued: police would not lay charges, prosecutors did not aggressively pursue cases; and judges gave lenient sentences or dropped cases altogether (Dutton & McGregor, 1991). This fragmented response motivated advocates to develop interventions to domestic violence that actively coordinated the work of law enforcement, courts and social services. These community intervention projects (CIPs) are system-level strategies designed to ensure the responses of all involved agencies remain consistent, and do not overlap. Holding offenders accountable and keeping women safe from revictimization are the ultimate goals (Edleson, 1991; Gelles, 1993; Pence, 1983; Tolman & Weisz, 1995).

Coordinated responses began to form such as arrest, aggressive pursuit of prosecutions, and the inclusion of the victims in the investigation and sentencing processes. In some projects, court mandated treatment for batterers was also an important part of the coordinated law enforcement, judicial, and social services efforts (Gelles, 1993). These efforts were in sync with the emergence of the community policing concept of proactive law enforcement which began to emerge in the early 1980s. By the early 1990's, several coordinated interventions were in place, and evaluations of these programs had begun.

Steinman (1990) examined the effects of a Domestic Violence Coalition in Lincoln, Nebraska, that incorporated pro-arrest policies and the commitment of the county attorney to prosecute whenever possible, with or without the cooperation of victims. Counseling agencies were also part of the Coalition, providing support for victims and batterer intervention programs. His study found that arrest alone led to increased violence by offenders, but that arrest in coordination with other efforts was a significant deterrent.

Another study examined coordinated efforts in DuPage County, Illinois (Tolman & Weisz, 1995). The DuPage, County Domestic Violence Protocol combined a tough law enforcement approach with a social work perspective. Pro-arrest policies and aggressive prosecution were key, along with victim advocates who offered support and information for the victims about legal processes, other support services available, and worked with the prosecution to encourage victims' cooperation. In addition, mandated participation in a domestic violence treatment program was usually required for first-time misdemeanor offenders. The evaluators found that in this program, arrest had a deterrent effect for at least 18 months, and recidivism decreased progressively for offenders who completed the most protocol levels (arrest, successful prosecution, and completion of a batterer's program).

The conclusion drawn from these studies is that coordination of criminal justice efforts can be an effective deterrent to domestic violence. This movement coincided with the new community policing philosophy, which, in sharp contrast to the traditional incident-based, reactive model of policing, takes a proactive approach to crime, and focuses on problem solving through partnerships. This philosophy calls for police to work more directly with citizens to solve crime problems before they escalate (Davis & Taylor, 1997), and was a good fit with inter-agency domestic violence work.

History of the Coordinated Community Response Approach: The Duluth Model

The earliest example of a coordinated, comprehensive response identified through a review of relevant literature was initiated in Duluth, Minnesota in 1980. This effort, known as the

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) coordinated the domestic violence response of nine agencies, drawing from the areas of law enforcement, criminal justice and human services. The purpose was to provide a uniform response to domestic violence calls by creating and implementing a common set of policies and procedures that not only limited the discretion of individuals handling the cases, but also held them to a minimum standard. This response held the offenders accountable and offered them educational and support systems designed to change their behavior. Stopping violence against women was the ultimate goal, with victim safety being the focus. The DAIP emphasized that “even if society did not create battering, it must nonetheless accept the responsibility of stopping it” (Pence, 1983, p. 252). It was the first community intervention project to assign responsibility for ending the violence to the community, instead of the victims (Pence, 1983; Pence & Shepard, 1999).

Before the actual creation of the DAIP, organizers met with administrators from police, city, prosecutors, mental health, and other agencies to ask them to join a unique interagency effort, and to determine the level of commitment on the part of administrators to that effort. Each agency was asked, and agreed, to help reduce repeat domestic violence assaults by developing policies and procedures and working together as an interagency coalition. Project organizers proposed to coordinate the city’s domestic violence response from the initial call to police through the end of the court’s involvement in each case. Evaluation of the coordinated response and problem-solving guidance would also be the responsibility of the DAIP. Once the agreement was secured, the three DAIP staff members and local shelter staff worked to construct an accurate picture of how the system was supposed to work, how it was actually working, and to identify necessary changes in agency procedures to make it work effectively (Pence, 1983;

1996). Again organizers met with the agency officials to negotiate the basics of each departments' policy agreement. Once all participating agencies agreed to the protocol, a press conference was held to announce the new approach, which went into effect immediately.

Operation of the Duluth Model

The intervention process starts when police respond to a domestic violence call. Typically, the officers establish probable cause to arrest the batterer, and take him to the jail for booking. Officials at the jail then contact the battered women's shelter, tell them about the arrest and charge, and give them relevant information for contacting the victim. A volunteer from the shelter then visits the victim at home to make a safety plan, explain the court process, and to help the victim decide whether to file for an order of protection. The volunteer advocate also talks with the woman about appropriate information to give to the judge before the next day's arraignment. The victim is then encouraged to attend weekly educational groups for battered women. Meanwhile, a volunteer from the DAIP goes to the jail to talk to the offender about educational groups that can help him address his use of violence (Pence, 1996).

At the arraignment (depending on whether the defendant pleads not guilty or guilty) either a pre-trial release interview or a pre-sentence investigation is ordered, both of which involve the victim communicating her concerns to the pre-trial release agent or the probation officer. In most cases, the judge will base the sentence on the probation officer's recommendations. First time offenders usually receive a stayed 30- or 60- day jail sentence, and are ordered to attend the DAIP 29-week educational program. Once on probation, the batterer has five days to make an appointment with the DAIP for assessment (Pence, 1996).

If an order of protection is handled through the civil court, the abuser is normally not allowed to enter the residence for a full year and is ordered to cooperate with the DAIP educational program. Once ordered to participate in the educational program, offenders go through intake with DAIP staff for evaluation, and attend one orientation and 27 education sessions. If the offender violates the order for protection or fails to attend the educational groups, his probation may be revoked upon request from project staff. Some, or the entire original jail sentence may then be imposed, and the offender will again be ordered to complete the program upon his release from jail (Pence, 1996). In addition to the educational program for batterers, the project also offers advocacy and support to the victims. The DAIP holds orientation sessions for women whose partners are in the program, gives out information about what to do if an abuser re-offends, and informs victims of the availability of the shelter.

From its inception, the DAIP has worked to coordinate the ongoing implementation of the project, promote institutional change, and continually monitor the city's criminal justice response. Given the wide spread reluctance of the criminal justice system to get involved with domestic violence when this program began, it is understandable how the DAIP gained recognition and respect for their success in negotiating an agreement between local criminal justice agencies to coordinate their intervention efforts.

Coordinated Community Responses Today

Duluth set a precedent for coordination of a multi-agency response to domestic violence. This community intervention model was the first to use a detailed, complex plan made up of several

different components organized to perform designated functions working toward a common goal. The coordinated responses that developed after the implementation of the “Duluth model” were not so inclusive at first. However, change did occur, albeit slowly, and coordinated responses have continued to grow. As the criminal justice system has expanded and improved upon its handling of domestic violence, awareness of the complexity of the problem and frustration with continually fragmented solutions has increased as well. Out of this awareness and frustration, more sophisticated coordinated community responses have emerged.

Modern collaborative community efforts typically involve an organizing body, such as a committee, task force, or non-profit organization, working with a wide base of agencies and services in an effort to improve the multi-system response to domestic violence (Clark, Burt, Schulte, & Maguire, 1996; Little, Malefyt, & Walker, 1998). Health care providers, religious leaders, child welfare agencies, mental health care providers, substance abuse services, school officials, and business leaders have all, on some level, recognized the social and moral costs of family violence in their communities. Many have also recognized the importance of their role in the prevention and intervention of family violence, and in reshaping the response to and attitude toward domestic violence. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (1998) recommended that communities have a coordinating mechanism that brings together agencies and community members in an effort to “close gaps in services, to coordinate multiple interventions, and to develop interagency agreements and protocols for providing basic services to families experiencing both child maltreatment and domestic violence.”

In 1994, the American Medical Association endorsed recommendations from the National Conference of Family and Violence: Health and Justice conference workgroups that stressed the importance of “interdisciplinary collaboration, empowerment of victims, perpetrator accountability, violence prevention, and the strengthening of families and communities” (Witwer & Crawford, 1995, p.17). This commitment on the part of government and professionals from many human and criminal justice service agencies, along with increased public awareness, lends support to improved collaborative responses to domestic violence.

Types and Approaches of Coordinated Community Responses

While coordinated community responses share a basic goal of ending violence against women within their respective communities, not all of these efforts share the same definition or approach to reaching their goals. What they do share is the same commitment for change, which necessarily requires each collaborative effort to develop commonly held beliefs on violence against women, awareness and understanding of each others’ roles; and a plan for improving the system-wide domestic violence response (Little, et al. 1996). A coordinated community response can take one of several approaches:

- Community Partnering – Using this model, a domestic violence or victim services program identifies a strategic plan of action and partners with selected community agencies and organizations to work on each task identified in the plan. Work groups are formed, using the expertise of the members to accomplish the specific task assigned to the group. Through each step of the plan, the work is collaborative, with the domestic violence program overseeing the groups’ efforts. The decentralized nature of this approach is attractive to the community and professional members who

are not decision-makers in their organization or community. Because membership is not limited to executive staff, members may be more likely to volunteer instead of being drafted, which can foster team building within the work groups. The work groups are focused on problem solving as opposed to being a public forum, which may minimize public posturing and turf issues. This approach lends itself to management by grassroots organizations, as it does not require a formal infrastructure.

- Community Intervention – These are private sector programs that focus on increasing criminal justice system accountability to battered women. The program staff develops and monitors the coordinated effort to promote victim safety, hold offenders accountable for their use of violence, and increase the public awareness and intolerance of domestic violence. Intervention programs provide direct services to batterers through outreach, education, and treatment groups throughout the assailant's experience with the criminal justice system. Many of these programs use the curriculum developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth. Intervention programs can evaluate the effectiveness of the system and make necessary modifications, keep open the lines of communication between each component, and develop as well as implement system wide protocols and policies.
- Task Forces or Coordinating Councils – Task forces focus on coordination of all components of the criminal justice system to improve systemic practice to end violence against women. The task force will conduct a needs assessment of the community and produce a report on the most effective practices and identify gaps in the system. Each component will then work on creating protocols and compatible

guidelines for practice within the system. Task forces or councils also function as forums for agencies and citizens to work on other collaborative projects, including cross-agency training, education, and data collection. Improving communication between agencies and coordination of council participants are important functions of the task force.

- Training and Technical Assistance Projects – These projects are designed to inform and improve justice and human services practice through training curricula and audiovisual materials. Training and assistance is available for every aspect of these systems as well as for clergy, educators, health care providers, civic groups, public housing staff, and more.
- Community Organizing – Community activists or domestic violence programs utilize these initiatives to invite the general public to actively work together to end domestic violence. Their objectives are to include people from all walks of life to be active participants in this work, articulate the message that each citizen has a personal responsibility to end the violence, and to change society's beliefs and awareness about the causes of violence against women as well as what can be done about it. This type of coordinated effort has been most successful in engaging communities of color and other marginalized populations in working together to end domestic violence (Hart, 1995; Little, Malefyt, & Walker, 1998; Pence, 1983).

Although there is no single ideal of collaboration, recent literature (Little, et al. 1998; Pence & Sheppard, 1999) has identified eight components or activities necessary for a successful coordinated response:

1. Creation of a shared philosophical framework on violence toward women;
2. Establishing “best practice” policies and procedures for intervention agencies;
3. Coordination of interagency communication and networking;
4. Tracking and monitoring of cases to ensure accountability;
5. Providing supportive community resources and services for victims;
6. Providing sanctions and rehabilitative services for batterers;
7. Protecting children who have been exposed to domestic violence;
8. Evaluation of the coordinated response from the victims’ points of view.

Membership and Leadership

The composition of the formal coordinating body may vary depending on the goals and focus of the coordinated response as well as the resources and population of each community. Ideally, participants should represent a diverse cross-section of criminal justice and social service agencies, as well as other segments of the community that may be affected by the group’s activities (Mattessich & Monsey, 1992). Members may include law enforcement, local battered women’s shelters, sexual assault services, mental health services, prosecution, court services, local government leaders, child protective services, batterer intervention programs, religious leaders, business leaders, health care providers, and members of the press (Burt, Harrell, Newmark, Aron, & Jacobs, 1997).

Some coordinating committees choose to keep the focus narrow and membership limited. For example, the Baltimore, Maryland Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee focuses primarily on criminal justice issues and activities, with few representatives from other

community agencies. Membership is comprised of two social service agencies, the city's only domestic violence shelter, a sexual assault center, and senior staff from criminal justice agencies and judges. In contrast, the San Diego Domestic Violence Council has representatives from over 20 agencies and individuals, from law enforcement to the military (Clark, et al. 1996).

The level of staff that participates in the group is another important component of the structure. Although many groups have primarily high-level staff, others consist of line workers and community members who form at a grass-roots level. An important consideration is whether an agency representative is able to make decisions or influence policy within their organization, which may allow for quick problem resolution. If not, having the backing and support of their agency is critical for successful collaboration within the system. Leadership is another important aspect to coordinated community responses. In a study of six coordinated community responses, Clark et al. (1996) found that leadership had a definite affect on the amount and ease of changes made by the respective groups. In the name of effective coordinated responses to domestic violence, agencies that typically have not worked together and frequently hold different views on the issue are now required to change their approach and do so cooperatively. This is not an easy task, but capable leadership can be the key to effective partnerships. Strong, consistent, and reliable leadership can motivate members to seek solutions. Once a dynamic leader is in place, stability of that leadership is also important for continuity of the coordinated effort.

Conclusion

This paper provides an historical overview of the evolution of domestic violence first into a public policy and then into a law enforcement issue. We have briefly reviewed the

transformation of domestic violence from being considered a private matter to one deserving of public condemnation and punishment. We have also reviewed the confluence of this evolution with that of inter-agency crime prevention work and community policing, and discussed the convergence of these three streams into inter-agency domestic violence collaboration.

In this condensed overview, we review the many types of inter-agency domestic violence collaboration that have developed since the initiation of the Duluth Model in 1980. This discussion sets the stage for part one of this report, which is a thorough examination of one city's inter-agency response to domestic violence.

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Chapter 4

History of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee: 1987-2000

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Prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Award #98DVWXXK015

June 2002

Chapter 4: History of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee: 1987-2000

Introduction

This chapter describes the emergence of an entity dedicated to improving inter-agency coordination in domestic violence service delivery, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC), then charts its work and activity level from its formation in 1987 to the time this research was conducted in 2000. In addition to an overview of the history of the DVCC, this chapter includes a discussion of the factors found pertinent for success and failure of DVCC, and a concluding section where these themes are drawn into an analytical framework. Special attention is given to the role of the police department and its relationships over time with the DVCC and with the individual agencies in the domestic violence service community.

The aim is to identify and present local lessons with broader applicability to the policing of domestic violence. The target audience is police chiefs as well as officials from government and community agencies involved in inter-agency domestic violence collaboration. The central lessons are summarized as follows:

1. *Leadership:* Dynamic and committed leadership by one key individual added enormous strength and momentum to the inter-agency effort from inception until the DVCC was well established.
2. *Membership:* (1) Early and steadfast police involvement was critical to the productivity of the effort. When this support was withdrawn and ties between the police and the DVCC lessened, the DVCC's effectiveness was substantially compromised. (2) A wide representation of agencies was important to achieving systemic improvement to domestic violence response. (3) The DVCC was most

- successful when members held sufficient rank within their respective agencies to make decisions and mobilize resources. The DVCC became ineffectual when members were relatively low level.
3. *Structure:* Initially the DVCC benefited from an informal structure that allowed the group's enthusiasm to flourish productively. Over time the structure solidified, but because the group was located advantageously where it was autonomous yet supported by a prestigious city office it continued to thrive. When it was relocated to a low-profile service provision agency, it declined.

To some readers, it may appear that these conclusions are self-evident. But this does not mean that stating them and exploring the circumstances in which they emerged is unimportant.

Although perhaps self-evident, the DVCC still fell victim to these pit-falls.

Further, the apparent obviousness of these lessons does not make them less significant. These ideas were critical to the inter-agency effort discussed here and are probably relevant to similar efforts elsewhere. Until such apparently simple issues are overcome, it is unlikely that agencies will have the opportunity to address the more nuanced issues impeding the efficiency of inter-agency collaborations. In other words, the basics are important and need to be addressed first.

Background

Domestic violence is a crime that has gained considerable attention in the last three decades.

Prior to the 1970s, domestic violence was barely a public concern. The victims', women's, and civil rights movements could be viewed as components of an overall social movement, through which domestic violence became a major concern for public policy.

Domestic violence emerged as an important part of policing as a result of the increased recognition of wife abuse as a public policy problem in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Advocates began calling for the police to be more attentive and sensitive to victims needs and to respond in a way that would hold batterers accountable for their actions (Hirschel & Hutchison, 1992; Jolin & Moose, 1997; Steinman, 1990). At this time, mutli-agency work toward solutions for specific crime problems such as domestic violence was a fairly new concept. In 1973, the U.S. National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals endorsed multi-agency work in their report entitled “A National Strategy to Reduce Crime,” which presented recommendations to police, courts, corrections, and community crime prevention on implementing new crime-reducing strategies within each area. In the chapter entitled “Police,” a specific section is devoted to recommendations on coordination with other criminal justice agencies, which reads in part,

No element of the criminal justice system completely discharges its responsibility simply by achieving its own immediate objectives. The police, the prosecutor, the courts, and probation, parole, and corrections agencies must cooperate with each other if the system is to operate effectively. This requires an effort on the part of each element to communicate with the other elements (National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, 1973, p. 89).

The earliest example of a coordinated, comprehensive response to domestic violence was initiated in Duluth, Minnesota in 1980. This effort, known as the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) coordinated the domestic violence response of nine law enforcement, criminal justice, and human services agencies. The purpose was to provide a uniform response to domestic violence calls by creating and implementing a common set of policies and procedures that not only limited the discretion of individuals handling the cases, but also held them to a

minimum standard (Jolin & Moose, 1997; Pence, 1983; Shepard & Pence, 1999; Steinman, 1990). Limiting individual discretion in this way was considered an important component of ensuring that services were provided consistently.

Following the implementation of the “Duluth Model,” coordinated responses began to form that included arrest, aggressive pursuit of prosecutions, and the inclusion of the victims in the investigation and sentencing processes. According to one researcher, this type of collaborative effort provided police with an opportunity to implement their most effective response to domestic violence in the history of this country (Gelles, 1993). Active participation of the police is an integral part of any effective multi-agency response to domestic violence. This is especially true in terms of the ability of the police to provide information and expert advice in relation to a crime problem. In some areas, local police were instrumental in the initial creation of a more coordinated response (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994b). By the early 1990s, several coordinated interventions were in place around the country, in which police departments were key partners. These themes were especially relevant to the development and success of the subject of this chapter, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee.

Findings

The Emergence of the DVCC

In the late 1980s, a captain in the homicide unit of the city police department was considering how police resources could be most effectively used to reduce the city’s high homicide rate, which was a top priority of the police department. In reviewing data, he noted that domestic violence homicides were often preceded by multiple police visits to the location, and thus,

concluded that earlier intervention into domestic violence cases provided an opportunity to prevent these homicides. Serendipitously, his interest coincided with the inception of an inter-agency domestic violence initiative, the DVCC, which sought to enhance the coordination of agencies responding to domestic violence.

The DVCC was the crystallization of the city's concern about the violent crime rate, which had evolved into a focus on domestic violence. This focus gave rise to the DVCC in 1987 when the city created a new domestic violence coordinator position to supervise two domestic violence counselors based at court; undertake domestic violence public awareness, education, and training efforts; and to develop a 'coordinating council' relating to domestic violence issues in the city. It is this coordinating council that became the DVCC.

In 1988 the newly hired coordinator convened a meeting of 24 local agencies that were involved in domestic violence service delivery in the city to discuss locally available resources. These individuals (including the above mentioned homicide captain) began meeting regularly, and ultimately formed a coalition known as the DVCC. The DVCC's membership was broad and meetings were well attended. In addition to private attorneys, private clinicians, interested citizens, several domestic violence victims, and at least one judge, membership included representatives from:

- Police department
- Magistrate's office
- Prosecutor's office
- Department of social services
- Agency that ran the battered women's shelter (BWS)
- Planned Parenthood
- Department of public schools
- Victim/witness program

- Hospital
- Mental health department
- Substance abuse counseling agency
- Public housing department

From the start the DVCC had a strong presence in local domestic violence work because most of the participants were policy makers in their respective agencies, as well as personally motivated to address domestic violence. The fact that coordination of the DVCC was part of the paid position of a city employee was also an important factor in its early stability.

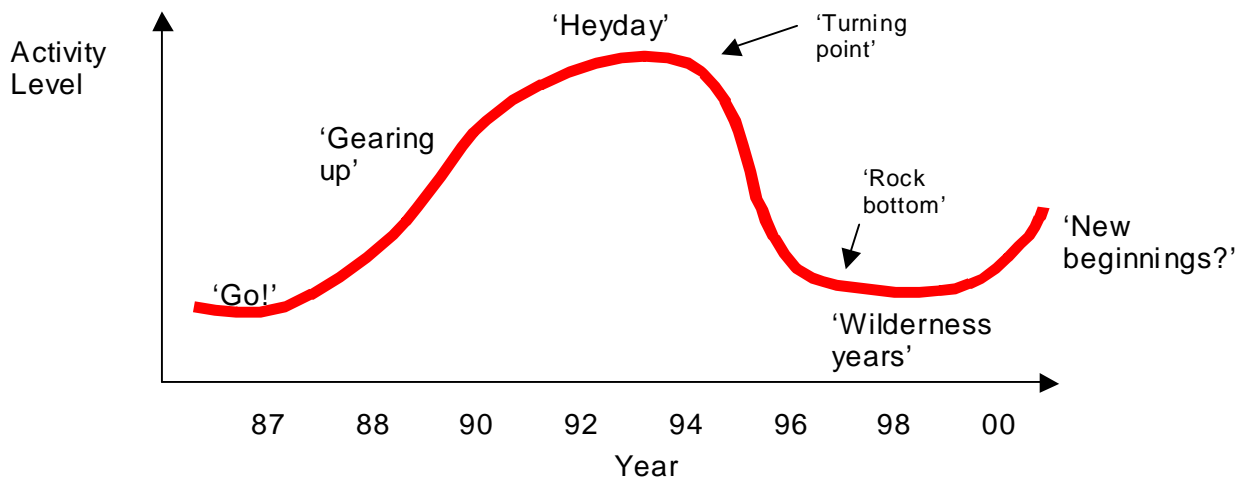
The original DVCC mission, as stated by one of the original members, was to “harness the efforts of community groups and agencies to identify and reduce the incidence of domestic violence,” and their strategy was to develop resources and to identify and address gaps in service. Another long-time DVCC member, who now runs a private batterer counseling organization, reported, “the point of the DVCC was to create a bumper so that anyone who entered the system at any point will receive services.” Establishing a continuity of service was a related goal of the DVCC. One of the initial areas of agreement between DVCC members was the need to improve service to victims by integrating the criminal justice/law enforcement response. Thus, the police department’s role in and cooperation with the group was identified as critical at the outset. The city police department was particularly active from the beginning, but as we shall see, over time the police role declined substantially.

Between 1988 and 1989, the inter-agency group took shape officially as the DVCC, initiating several domestic violence education projects as it did so. After its initial development as an informal group, the DVCC obtained official status as a non-profit organization on November 10, 1988.

History of the DVCC 1987-2000

There has been significant variation over time in the number of active committee members, the vitality, nature of activities undertaken, and the extent of the DVCC's influence on the local community. A graphical characterization of the DVCC's history is shown as Figure 1, where the distinct phases of its history are described in language intended to capture the essence of these periods, such as 'heyday' and 'rockbottom.'

Figure 1: Characterization of the History of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC): 1987-2001



At its peak, the coalition claimed a plethora of active members working as an influential force in the community, while at its low-point, the coalition was all but dormant. Throughout, the DVCC has been a community body comprised of an array of local agencies that provide service to domestic violence victims and offenders. Because the lessons from the DVCC's times of strength *and* weakness may usefully inform the work of agencies and similar coalitions

elsewhere, we present a chronology of the life of the DVCC, and explicate the factors associated with its productive as well as its dormant periods.

*A. 1987-1988: Background to, Birth of, and 'Gearing Up' of the DVCC
Strength through Informality*

Describing the early stages of the DVCC, the founder and first coordinator commented about membership and organizational strength:

I think the reason it was as strong as it was, for as long as it was, is because it was a very inclusive organization – we had no power and no money, so we didn't have to be exclusive. We did not have to set up an artificial hierarchy with a board of directors and so on. We could invite the world, and have everybody who showed up be equal. It was truly a democratic model for how to run a community-based organization. It involved everyone who could possibly be identified as a stake -holder – organizationally and individually. We made a really consistent attempt to have constituent involvement, and we did have battered women themselves come in and out of the organization.

The first police representative on the DVCC was a captain when he first became involved with the newly forming DVCC, and remained an active DVCC member until his retirement as assistant chief six years later. His comments on the initial successfulness of the DVCC echoed those of the first coordinator. He suggested that the DVCC's productivity was perhaps because there was very little in-between ideas and action, as the group did not have any internal or external bureaucratic hoops to jump through prior to taking action.

Early and consistent police involvement

In describing the strength and effectiveness of the DVCC, several interviewees explicitly attributed much of the success to the strong presence of the Police Department. This support lent political legitimacy as well as practical value to the DVCC's efforts. The homicide captain, later assistant chief, was the man widely recognized as responsible for initial police interest because

he was involved from the beginning and ultimately served for years on the DVCC's board of directors. His initial motivation for involvement, as noted by himself and others, was a professional desire to reduce domestic violence homicides and a belief that working collaboratively with domestic violence service agencies was an effective means to that end. Many interviewees opined that he had the combination of rank, personal zeal, and professional commitment to produce a powerful leverage of police department resources. One significant contribution was enlisting the support of the police chief.

This now-retired police official referred to the police department as one of the original "movers and shakers" in the DVCC. Although reducing the homicide rate was the impetus for the police department's involvement with the DVCC, the department's interest grew over time into a general commitment to improve domestic violence service delivery. The strong role of the police throughout the early and most active years of the DVCC was exemplified by donations of meeting room space, funds for printing material, and collection and sharing of crime data. In addition, police management exerted pressure on officers to take domestic violence seriously and make arrests. For example, supervisors reportedly reviewed officers' domestic violence reports and followed-up on cases where arrests were not made.

The close relationship between the Police Department and the DVCC was manifested in several ways notably that the DVCC provided training for the police department, at several points in its history. First, in 1988, the DVCC provided in-service domestic violence training to police department officers, and the department encouraged participation by offering officers continuing education credits to attend. The DVCC again trained city police officers between 1990 and 1991

after a presumptive arrest law went into affect in the state. During this two-year span, the DVCC provided in-service training on the new law for all city Police officers (at that time there were about 600). The training was an intense half-day session that included in-person testimony by domestic violence victims.

B. 1989-1994: The DVCC's 'Heyday'

The DVCC became more secure in 1990 when the city manager's office obtained a grant to fund an employee dedicated to violence prevention. The woman hired to, among other duties, develop a domestic violence coordinated council (what became the DVCC) accepted the position and continued her role on the DVCC, melding responsibility for coordinating the group into her new position. Several interviewees attributed the DVCC's success in becoming central to local domestic violence service delivery to her skilled leadership. In addition, the new position within the city manager's office, provided status, security, and funding to the DVCC.

From 1989 to 1994 the DVCC was extremely active and visible in the community. Ongoing activities included producing domestic violence education materials to insert into utility bills, producing and distributing domestic violence resource directories, successfully launching a new, coordinated approach to domestic violence, training police officers, YWCA volunteers and clergy, producing a video for training police recruits in handling domestic violence, co-sponsoring a lobby day with a local non-profit domestic violence group, publicizing domestic violence awareness month, and hosting "mini-conferences." In addition, members represented the DVCC at various anti-domestic violence educational/publicity events and appearances around the city.

Mini conferences

Each year the DVCC put together a series of half-day conferences on a range of domestic violence-related topics. Each mini-conference included speakers and workshops around a specific domestic violence-related topic. Conference fees were minimal, and conferences were always well attended, usually by 25 to 30 people. At least one conference had almost 70 attendees. Some conferences aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the effects and implications of domestic violence upon different populations. Other conferences aimed to assist professionals meet the needs of domestic violence victims and batterers, by offering training in recognizing victimization and information about services available in the city.

Domestic Violence Initiative (DVI)

For the first part of the DVCC's existence, members focused on domestic violence education and advocacy. As they collaborated together in new ways, questions about domestic violence services and response emerged, such as: What accounted for the disparity between the high number of "domestic trouble" calls to which the police department reported responding each day and the low number of similar cases heard at juvenile and domestic court each day?; What guidelines should magistrates use to determine release times and bond levels?; Why did warrant and protective order decisions depend on which magistrate was petitioned?; Are batterer counseling programs effective at reducing recidivism, and what was the best way to measure results? Once the DVCC was "geared up," it was prepared to tackle these questions, as it strove to fulfill its original purpose: enhancing inter-agency, domestic violence collaboration.

With many issues and shortfalls to efficient integrated domestic violence response identified, the DVCC set about effecting the improvements they believed were needed. This took the shape of a new effort called the Domestic Violence Initiative (DVI). The DVI was launched in 1990 by DVCC member and non-member agencies, with the DVCC at the helm. The effort was comprised of three main activities:

- Ensuring that each facet of the law enforcement/court system including police, magistrates, prosecutor's office, court intake, judges, and service providers, had written domestic violence policies and procedures in place.
- Training for personnel employed in each branch of the criminal justice system.
- Development of a feedback system for evaluating the effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

Many, if not most, of the key city agencies took part in the DVI, and in doing so, made important changes in their domestic violence policies and procedures. These changes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Changes in Agency Policies and Procedures, c. 1991

Agency	Changes in Policy or Procedure
Police Department	Produced cards to give to domestic violence victims that included police officer information, and other information on legal and social services assistance.
	Instituted reporting form to be used for tracking domestic violence and ensuring that officers took appropriate action.
	Began feeding information on domestic violence incidents to the battered womens' shelter for follow-up.
	Attempted to institute presumptive arrest policy, but could not because other agencies did not have similar policy.
	Launched academy and in-service training for officers in domestic violence and victimology.
Magistrate's Office	Policy was amended so that arrest warrants were issued for all acts of violence.
Prosecutor's Office	Institutionalized training for all attorneys in victimology and in assisting victims with the court process.
	Policy changed to prosecute all misdemeanor domestic violence cases and not to drop cases at complainants' request.
	Policy changed to refrain from prosecuting complainants for refusal to testify.
	Procedure changed to meet with complainants before hearings to help them understand process and hear their concerns.
Juvenile and Domestic Court Services	Training for intake workers implemented.
	Policy changed to consolidate cases involving the same individual into one hearing, where possible.
	Complainants seeking protective orders are prioritized over other cases.
Battered Womens' Shelter	Began contacting domestic violence victims to offer services and assistance, using information provided by police
Men's Abuse Control Program	Changed batterer counseling programs to require a fee instead of being free, since experiences suggest that perpetrators take groups more seriously when they have to pay.

Reviewing progress of the Domestic Violence Initiative

In order for the DVI to be effective, the DVCC believed that regular and systematic reviews and documentation of its progress were important, and the requirements to do this were explicitly established at the outset. Members of the DVCC assessed and documented the work of the initiative in several ways. First, in 1992, they compiled the details of the initiative into a bound written volume. The volume included background information about the DVCC and detailed descriptions of each participating agency's role in the initiative.

In 1993 a review of the DVI was held where officials of participating agencies convened to monitor, assess, and summarize progress so that participants could see who had done what and with what results. The review was attended by influential representatives from key agencies, such as the police homicide captain, the chief of police, several judges, the chief magistrate, and a variety of local service agencies. Members convened and reviewed areas where community services had increased, and agency representatives discussed changes in their agencies. Police representatives discussed the filling out of reports, judges talked about their annual training sessions, and magistrates reported policy changes. It is unclear for how long these changes endured. As will be seen in the next section, the DVCC's vitality dropped off precipitously in the few years after the first DVI review.

In sum, the DVCC began with the appointment of a committed and able leader who had the ability to organize members as well as to effectively handle public relations. Once funding was secured from the city manager's office the DVCC had financial security and political clout. Many local agencies became involved and continued their involvement. In particular, the police played a prominent role. The DVCC sponsored a range of educational activities and became a central figure in the domestic violence service delivery community. At the pinnacle of the DVCC's strength, it launched the DVI, which was a multi-agency effort to improve city-wide policies and responses to domestic violence. In sum, the formation and success of the DVCC was accomplished by a small group of committed actors working at the grassroots level, whose efforts were supported by many city agencies.

C. 1994 – Turning Point

Around 1994-1995 the DVCC's momentum and membership began to wane. There are several competing, but not mutually exclusive, explanations about what broke the DVCC's stride and then perpetuated its decline. The contending explanations are:

(1) leadership problems, (2) departure of several key members and internal competition, and (3) a bureaucratic change within the city that detached the DVCC from the purview and status of the city manager's office. Together it is likely that these factors came together to produce a 'turning point' (c.f. Gladwell, 2001) resulting in the rapid downturn of the DVCC and inter-agency domestic violence work in the city.

Leadership problems

In 1992, the original chairperson left the city for personal reasons, and responsibility for coordinating the DVCC shifted across a series of members elected by the DVCC membership. This was a major set-back to the DVCC because all at once it lost two of its most important assets: a dedicated, well-connected, and beloved leader, and its explicit connection to the city manager's office, which had provided funding and status. From this time on, the DVCC did not have anyone whose paid job description included coordinating the DVCC. Further, the DVCC's status was marginalized after it was no longer under the protective wing of the city manager's office.

The original DVCC chairperson was well connected within the city and commonly recognized as a dedicated and charismatic leader with ample political savvy to build an effective DVCC underpinned with strong community and government support. She was also the only person to

hold this position as part of paid employment. It may be in large part due to an unavoidable comparison with her that none of the three subsequent chairpersons escaped criticism from interviewees. Each of them and their role is described in turn below.

The second DVCC coordinator was purported to be a good leader, but overwhelmed by the work. This coordinator lasted one year. The third was an active and longtime DVCC member who was said by interviewees to have proved herself again and again, both as hardworking and dedicated to the DVCC, and to the cause of addressing domestic violence. Unlike the first chairperson, neither the second nor third was mandated to undertake the work as part of their paid employment. Hence, in retrospect, it was almost inevitable that the time, energy, and commitment they could offer were at a lower level. Nonetheless, this coordinator worked diligently for the DVCC both internally within the group and externally by representing the DVCC at various media events. Ostensibly, the group remained strong throughout her term, though its ties to the city were becoming more tenuous.

Several interviewees reported that the fourth coordinator was also an extremely diligent and driven worker who was passionate about the cause; however, those interviewed felt that her strident and caustic manor alienated many would be allies and committee members. At a time when the DVCC needed a well-connected leader to mitigate the damage of losing the high-status parent of the city manager's office, they were led by a woman who focused on community outreach and education. With the DVCC drifting and losing momentum, interviewees reported that the DVCC was "an unproductive way to spend your time." This may explain why many agencies, the police included, began to withdraw from activities and meetings. It did not take

long until DVCC attendance and membership hit an all time low of four or five members in 1997-1998.

Key members move on and there is internal competition among members

Concurrent with the departure of the first coordinator, several additional central members also moved on for various reasons. One of these was the previously discussed police official, who moved to become a police chief in another city. He was the primary connection with the police department since the outset of the DVCC, and his absence created a void that was never filled.

The director of BWS and the chief magistrate also terminated their involvement with the DVCC. Losing these members who were knowledgeable about, interested in, and committed to the DVCC, was a set-back; however, this could have been mitigated if their replacements were of comparable stature. Unfortunately for the DVCC, this did not occur. A police sergeant replaced the assistant chief. BWS did not designate a definite replacement representative, but instead sent staff to the DVCC meetings depending on who was available. The chief magistrate ceased his involvement, apparently due to conflicts in the DVCC pertaining to questions about whether his agency was responding adequately to domestic violence. Purportedly, he was frequently taken to task in DVCC meetings for the unresponsiveness and inconsistency of the magistrates in issuing protective orders and warrants. As a consequence of what he felt were personal attacks, he terminated his involvement.

While these developments were in and of themselves harmful to the DVCC, they were indicative of a larger problem – a lack of commitment on the part of agencies. A police official familiar

with the police department's history with the DVCC noted that, "for any group to be successful, there needs to be buy-in from the department heads. I think that's what the DVCC was lacking." and other interviewees also referred to "lack of ownership" and "lack of support" as severe problems.

Another membership issue, mentioned several times in interviews, was personality conflicts and competition among members. One member reported:

Lack of ownership was the beginning of the downfall. Then the differences in philosophy and ideas about the purpose of the group continued that. Personality conflicts did not help either.

Several interviewees commented specifically about the problem of individual agendas, one referring to the deteriorating situation as a "push – my – own – agenda game." Determining which of these dynamics instigated or played the largest role in the decline of the DVCC is difficult. As often with such events, the specific sequence of events, or direct consequences of any one event, remained unclear even after many in-depth interviews. It is hypothesized that many of these factors were inter-related, and the decline due to a combination and confluence of them.

Bureaucratic changes set DVCC adrift

Initially the DVCC was supported by a funded coordinator position, and a safe location within a city agency. Two years after its inception, it gained status and legitimacy when responsibility for coordinating the committee was transferred to a new and advantageous location within the city government, the city manager's office. In 1992, when the original DVCC coordinator resigned her position, the strength of the relationship between the DVCC and the city was diminished, because her position was not filled, and thus the DVCC no longer had a paid coordinator or an

explicit connection to the city manager's office. This office still supported the DVCC, however, by paying for mailings and was still informally connected to the DVCC via an active committee member who was employed therein. Time gradually eroded this tenuous connection until late 1995 when a new city manager reorganized portions of the city's bureaucratic structure, and in doing so, severed the last functional connection between the DVCC and the city. At this point, there was no longer anyone in the city manager's office who was affiliated with the DVCC, much less paid to coordinate it. When interviewed for this study, an original member and ex-coordinator stated that the DVCC "could not continue when separated from the city manager's office."

Police department involvement after the turning point

After the exit of the assistant chief, police department involvement in the DVCC declined. The sergeant tasked to represent the police department on the DVCC worked at the training academy, and, for the duration of her time on the DVCC, the committee continued to hold its meetings there. When this sergeant was transferred within the police department in 1997, the DVCC no longer met in police facilities, and police attendance at DVCC meetings ceased.

The reduced police involvement with the DVCC also corresponds to the tenure of a new police chief, appointed in 1995. When interviewed, the chief stated that he did not believe that police involvement with the committee was productive and expressed skepticism about police involvement in addressing domestic violence. Several other interviewees stated that the subsequent priorities of the police department did not appear to include domestic violence.

D. 1996-1998 – ‘Rock Bottom’ and ‘The Wilderness Years’

By 1996, DVCC membership had dwindled to four or five members. Some members had unrelated personal reasons for moving on. Others, however, simply felt that the group was no longer productive. One agency official noted that “the DVCC was basically a non-entity.”

While the DVCC was largely absent from the city’s anti-domestic violence community, a new initiative emerged, which we term, the “Family Violence Working Group” (FVWG). The police department was a leader of the FVWG, which had one purpose: to determine the most effective use of domestic violence funds received by the police department from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and to spend the funds accordingly. A police sergeant in charge of obtaining and administering grants led the group. Other participants included representatives from Social Services, the BWS, the Prosecutors Office, the police department, and the State Supreme Court.

Ultimately, the FVWG decided to produce several domestic violence education videos. One was to be used for training police recruits in the proper handling of domestic violence calls, and one was to help domestic violence victims understand the court process. Two public service announcements were also produced, one that warned against committing domestic violence and one that provided hotline numbers to victims. As soon as the project was completed, in 1999, the FVWG disbanded. In describing the impetus to launch the FVWG, one social services official stated: “Because we knew the DVCC was not capable of making any decisions, the public agencies at that time got together and started the [FVWG].” The scope of the FVWG was quite limited and the FVWG was never intended to lead to sustained inter-agency cooperation. Still,

its existence indicates that inter-agency domestic violence work continued in the city, on some level.

E. 1999-2001 – Resurgence

During 1999, the DVCC began a resurgence. The energy and dedication of several individuals with institutional memory of the past success and value of the DVCC lay behind this attempt. The revitalization was initiated by a supervisor at Department of Social Services with responsibility for domestic violence programming. Realizing that there was no longer a viable coordinated response, she tasked a domestic violence worker with leadership experience to “get the DVCC going again.” Subsequently, meetings were held almost monthly, and interest reemerged. Almost two years after the process began, the DVCC was on the verge of again being an active part of the domestic violence service delivery system.

While this development is promising, several interviewees expressed concerns about the newly emergent DVCC. When asked what made the DVCC weak, one interviewee stated: “We [the DVCC] don’t belong to anybody. There is no supporting agency to fund the group,” while another opined of the “lack of backing from the powers that be.” However, at the time of this writing, a wide range of agencies were participating in DVCC meetings, including the police department, along with individuals who had been committed to the DVCC throughout its history. One interviewee reported, “At this point the DVCC is 150 times better than it was.”

Discussion and Conclusions

While the scope of the study does not allow us to identify members' specific operational decisions and actions that affected the fortunes of the DVCC, it is possible to discern several distinct themes. These are that particular aspects to leadership, membership, and group structure were critical to making and breaking the DVCC. Most likely a combination of these factors converged to initially, make the DVCC successful, and later, after certain key changes, to bring about its decline. Initially the DVCC benefited from a skilled leader who was able to focus the energy of diverse individuals, into a productive and respected organization. Though the group had many dedicated members committed to the cause of addressing domestic violence, upon this leader's retirement, none were truly able to fill her shoes, and the void dragged down the forward momentum of the DVCC.

Membership was also an important ingredient in the DVCC's success. For the first several years of the DVCC's existence a broad range of agencies were represented in its membership, including law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies. While this was the case the DVCC was productive and was even able to launch an ambitious multi-agency effort to improve response to domestic violence, which involved many agencies engaging in additional training, updating policies, and working together toward a more seamless service delivery system. The police in particular were very active throughout these early stages. When a few key members, representing key agencies left the DVCC, and their agencies were either no longer represented or were represented by less committed and or low-status individuals then the momentum was further undermined.

The final factor identified as important to the DVCC is its structure. Initially, the DVCC capitalized on its informal structure by allowing the energy of the original members to generate and act on ideas. But this does not mean that maintaining this structure was necessary for the DVCC's continued success. In fact, the DVCC continued to thrive after the structure became more formalized, now benefiting from new advantages, such as a prominent location within the city's government where it was autonomous and supported. It was only when it was moved to a disadvantageous, non autonomous and non supported location within a service delivery unit when structure worked against it and further momentum was diffused.

Implications for Policing

In their review of inter-agency crime prevention efforts work, Webb and Laycock (2000) present telling summaries of the problems and pitfalls that inter-agency groups often encounter. Their insightfulness into 'partnership pitfalls' makes them worth revisiting in the present context, and their (vaguely satirical) typology is shown as Figure 2.

Figure 2: Laycock and Webb's Typology of Early Partnership Pitfalls

- Who's in charge here?
- It's not our job, it's yours
- Your priorities are not mine
- We'd like to help but it would reduce our profits
- We've got no money, can we have some of yours?
- I'm in from the local voluntary group – what can I do?

The Laycock and Webb (2000) analysis was based upon many years of effort implementing local inter-agency initiatives, and their discussion goes further than the typology shown here.

However, the relevance of the ‘pitfalls’ typology to the present discussion is evident: The DVCC in our case study thrived when it overcame the pitfalls, and declined when they gained prominence. Many of the specific aspects highlighted by the Laycock and Webb typology were evident in the present case study: Competing agendas and personalities, funding issues, leadership issues, individual abilities, and political clout, were among the key aspects that dictated the rise and fall of the inter-agency domestic violence committee. In the present study, it seemed that several of the issues were inter-related: as funding ended, leadership shifted leading to problems in the agenda and work of the DVCC. Yet the picture was far more complex than to simply conclude that funding is everything. It is important, but it is not everything. Rather, efforts need to be made to encourage the convergence of factors that ensure such an inter-agency effort becomes, and remains, productive, producing a tipping point. This should typically mean ensuring that high-level support is gained in key agencies, particularly the police and social services. Where that support is absent, it should be sought via different channels. A reluctant police chief might be nudged into action via different approaches: perhaps simply some basic lobbying through letters and calls from prominent players in other agencies.

Figure 3: Inter-Agency ‘Tipping Point’ Factors

A. Key Precursors to Development and Growth:

- Ability: leadership, coordination, knowledge, connections, dedication
- Motivation and ability to motivate others
- Other key motivated personnel
- Financing
- Political clout
- Police involvement

These positive factors were the precursors of a positive cycle of reinforcement that meant the DVCC went from strength to strength.

B. Key Precursors to Decline and Decay:

- Loss of leadership without equivalent replacement.
- Loss of financing
- Loss of political clout (the link to city manager’s office)
- Loss of police contact person without equivalent replacement
- New police chief with ‘old school’ views on domestic violence

These negative factors were the precursors of a vicious cycle of decline and decay that resulted in loss of direction of the DVCC, and ultimately in several years without credibility or much activity.

Stronger means could incorporate applications to the city manager’s or mayor’s office, who typically have influence upon the police department.

What are the implications of this study for police departments and anti-domestic violence policing efforts across the country? Figure 3 summarizes some of the findings from the present

study as key ‘tipping point’ issues that induced the ebb and flow, respectively, of anti-domestic violence efforts in the city.³

The summary factors shown in Figure 3 are taken from our case study of a single city. It shows the issues relating to the production of both the positive and negative ‘tipping points’ in relation to the inter-agency domestic violence work and policing. These issues almost certainly have a broader relevance to inter-agency domestic violence-related work and police work across the nation, as well, perhaps, to more general inter-agency crime control and policing efforts. Police departments can clearly benefit from the knowledge and expertise of other agencies in the community. At this point we have returned to the opening sentence of this report – inter-agency cooperation is a foundation of modern policing. However, we add to this statement the rider that the police should make efforts to ensure the convergence of positive tipping point factors, and discourage the convergence of negative tipping point factors. Inter-agency cooperation in policing needs to be tailored to the local context, individuals, and agencies for it to be productive. These are the significant broader implications of the present study for American policing.

³ The ‘tipping point’ concept is adapted from Gladwell (2000) who used it to refer to a convergence of factors, rather than a single factor, producing the momentum for the sharp reduction in the New York City crime rate during the 1990’s.

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Chapter 5

The Current State of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee: 2000-2001

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Prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Award #98DVW XK015

June 2002

Chapter 5: The Current State of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee: 2000-2001

Introduction

Now that the groundwork has been laid in the previous chapter of this report for understanding the evolution of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC) through its first 13 years of existence, the view is broadened to the DVCC within the context of the domestic violence service community. This description is based on the community of agencies involved in domestic violence service delivery in the city in 2000 and 2001 and includes examination of the working relationships among the agencies in the system, between these agencies and the DVCC, and in particular, the role of the police department and its centrality to the DVCC.

It is the role of the police as well as the domestic violence service delivery community's perception of the police that is the focus of this chapter. This will be addressed by (1) describing the DVCC and its role as the explicit inter-agency domestic violence collaboration, (2) describing the DVCC member and non member agencies that comprise the domestic violence service delivery system, (3) discussing the role of the police department and its officers in response to domestic violence, and (4) presenting perspectives of the police by others in the domestic violence service community. Overall, these findings indicate that while the police are central to responding to domestic violence, not until well into the field work for this study have they been involved with the DVCC, and they generally have not been active in interagency efforts to improve domestic violence response.

Findings

Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee

Since 1986 the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee (DVCC) has been the primary locus of multi-agency, inter-disciplinary domestic violence service in the city. The DVCC is comprised of representatives from city government, non-profit organizations, and religious agencies working toward a more comprehensive, integrated, and seamless response to domestic violence. The DVCC, as outlined in the previous chapter, has a long history existing since 1987 as a coalition working to improve the domestic violence service delivery system, as well as to educate the public about domestic violence.

During this period, the strength of the DVCC has waxed and waned. For the first years of its existence the DVCC was strong, vibrant, and an influential player in the city. Then, for myriad of reasons, its membership and activity level declined substantially. When active, the DVCC has served several important functions, most notably being a locus for cross-agency networking and inter-agency, multi disciplinary work, and a sponsor of domestic violence education and lobbying efforts. In 2000 and 2001, the study period for this research, the DVCC is re-energizing and is poised to again be a productive force for domestic violence advocacy and education. With membership growing, an organizational structure being put into place, and plans for future activities being discussed and formulated, the DVCC is becoming an active entity again.

The DVCC's mission statement states, "We are a group of professionals and concerned citizens formed to serve the citizens of [name of city] in the following ways:

- To encourage the most effective means of community action in identifying and reducing the incidence of domestic violence
- To enhance public awareness of domestic violence and to educate professional [sic] and the general public of the aspect of domestic violence
- To provide a forum for networking and information sharing concerning issues of domestic violence"

Three standing sub-committees called executive, education and membership, as well as ad hoc sub-committees that are formed when necessary pursue these goals. The six-person executive committee steers the DVCC and handles administrative tasks such as conducting meetings, and taking, writing, and distributing minutes. In conjunction with the education committee, several sub-committees have recently formed to work on four projects, some of which are ongoing: (1) producing an updated service directory, (2) assembling data on domestic violence in the city, (3) establishing a recognition program to identify and commend individuals who have handled a specific domestic violence case especially well, and (4) organizing conferences on domestic violence topics. The membership committee is concerned with building the DVCC's roster and particularly with recruiting participants from hitherto unrepresented agencies. An elected chairperson creates agendas and presides over meetings.

The DVCC holds meetings once a month at the juvenile and domestic courthouse. Meetings are always an information sharing and networking opportunity. At each meeting, members announce a variety of domestic violence related activities and trainings, oftentimes discussing legislation soon to be voted on by the state legislature. Members also share literature and report on the activities of coordinating committees from neighboring counties. Many DVCC meetings include guest speakers, usually from a local agency providing information about their agency's domestic violence related activities and role in the domestic violence service delivery system. At

each meeting, time is set aside for discussing specific domestic violence cases. This provides the opportunity for agency representatives, who may have contact with the same case, to gain information about aspects of the case of which they may not be aware.

Membership and Core Members

Originally, coordinating the DVCC was included in the job description of a city employee who left that position in 1992. Within a year of her departure the position was eliminated, and now the DVCC is entirely comprised of professionals who volunteer to serve on the DVCC in addition to their regular duties. DVCC members include representatives from city and state agencies, community non-profit organizations, and religious organizations that work in the area of domestic violence service delivery. While there are about 60 individuals who claim some cursory involvement with the DVCC, meeting attendance is usually between ten and 15 people.

Committee membership cannot be precisely defined because participation varies, but there is a core group that forms the backbone of the DVCC and an array of individuals and agencies with varying levels of commitment and affiliation. Table 1 lists agencies comprising the domestic violence service community, showing the members of the DVCC in gray shading. Agencies shaded dark gray are those represented on the executive committee of the DVCC and agencies shaded light gray are members. We defined agencies as members if they were represented at at least one meeting between September 1999 and January 2001. We have identified 25 agencies that fit this criterion.

Table 1: Domestic Violence Service Delivery Community

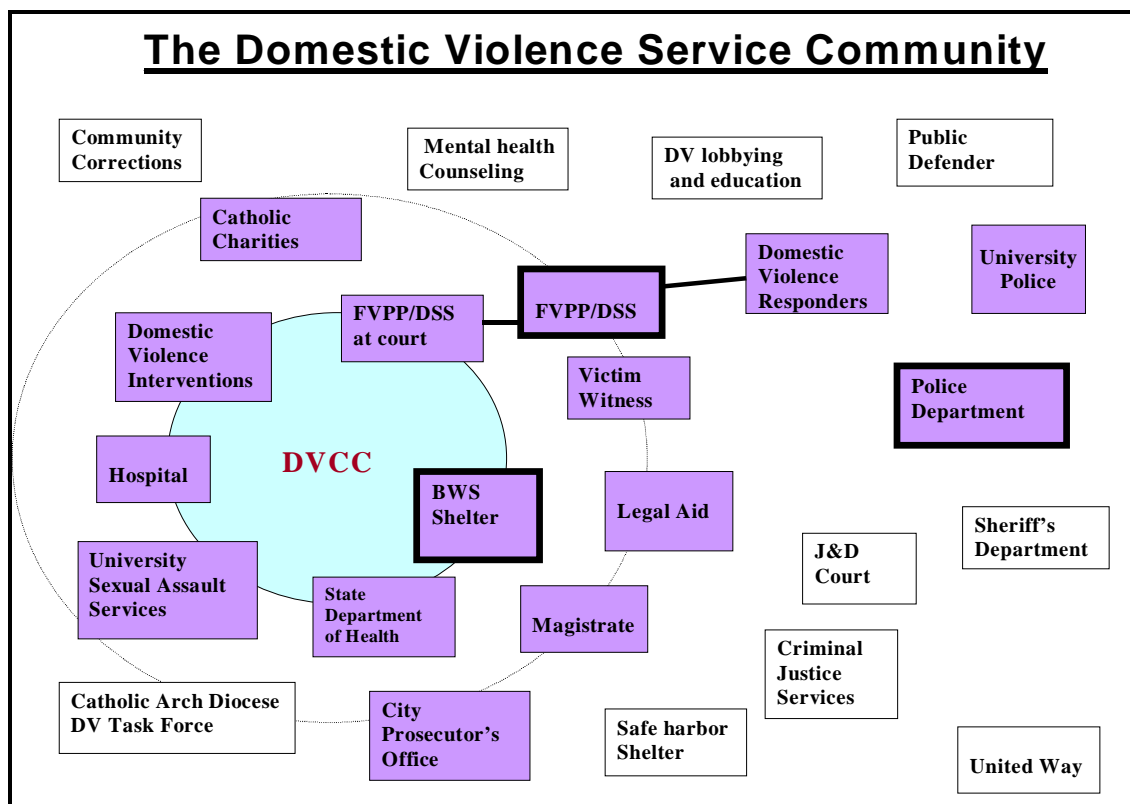
Agency	Agency's Function Pertaining to Domestic Violence (members shaded gray)
State Dept. of Health (Chairperson)	Works with localities to form and monitor fatality review teams.
Domestic Violence Interventions (Vice Chair)	Provides counseling for batterers and monitors batterers' compliance with court ordered treatment.
Hospital Emergency Room (Secretary)	Provides emergency medical services to victims of domestic violence.
Department of Social Services at court (Treasurer)	Provides counseling and a variety of direct services to domestic violence victims.
University sexual assault service (Member at Large)	Assists students who have been sexually assaulted and promotes sexual assault awareness and education to the campus community.
BWS (Member at Large)	Battered women's shelter: provides safe emergency and temporary housing to domestic violence victims.
Magistrate's Office	Issues warrants and emergency protective orders.
Prosecutor's Office	Prosecutes domestic violence cases.
Victim Witness	Provides court accompaniment and information to victims.
Legal Aid	Provides legal services to domestic violence victims on civil matters.
Catholic Charities	Provides a variety of service, including counseling services to victims and perpetrators, and emergency food and clothing.
Family Violence Prevention Program at Social Services	Places and monitors batterers referred by court in Batterer Intervention and other programs as necessary.
Catholic Arch Diocese Domestic Violence Task Force	Addresses the issue of domestic violence in religious communities.
Local law enforcement agency	Respond to domestic violence calls on and in vicinity of campus; assist students who have been sexually assaulted or stalked.
City Police Department	First responders to domestic violence calls.
Domestic Violence Responders	Unit of Social Services that responds to domestic violence calls in tandem with police to assist domestic violence victims obtain information about and services from Social Services.
Criminal Justice Information and Services Center	Conducts research, implements and monitors victim witness programs around the state, and provides police training.
Community Corrections	Provide Probation and Parole officers for offenders, as well as

	Batterer Intervention Groups.
Mental Health Authority	Government program providing mental health counseling and services for victims of domestic violence.
United Way	Charitable organization providing funds and services to various groups serving victims.
Public Defender's Office	Provide free legal services for perpetrators at trial
Sheriff's Department	Deliver warrants and summons to court, provide courtroom security
Domestic Violence Lobbying and Education	Non profit domestic violence advocacy and education group that provides technical assistance to community responses to domestic violence.
Safe Harbor Shelter	A shelter for battered women that accepts city residents but is located in a neighboring county
Juvenile and domestic Court	Handles cases involving juveniles and domestic violence

The city police department is not shown to be a member of the DVCC because we did not observe their representatives attend any meetings during this time. It should be noted, however, that in August 1999 police representatives did attend to show a victim assistance video they had been involved in creating; additionally, the police department was becoming involved as our fieldwork was concluding in January 2001.

Figure 1 provides a visual view of the domestic violence service community by displaying the component agencies visually in relation to their involvement with the DVCC.

Figure 1: The Domestic Violence Service Community



In Figure 1 above, the extent to which an agency is involved in the DVCC is reflected in the proximity of its icon to the DVCC icon. The six agencies positioned on the circle closest to the DVCC icon are those represented on the executive committee. The agencies on the outer circle are those with involvement in the DVCC, defined as agencies that were observed attending at least one meeting over the study period. Agencies outside these circles have (or at the time when we began observation, had) no official involvement in the DVCC. Certain agency icons are shaded indicating that an interview with at least one representative was completed for this study. In the interview, subjects were asked with which other agencies if any they worked on domestic

violence. In response to this question the following three agencies were mentioned far more than any others: the Police Department, the agency that runs the battered womens' shelter (BWS) and Department of Social Services (DSS). These are shown in bold. The next section describes the function and role of the main elements in the domestic violence service delivery system.

Battered Women's Shelter (BWS)

The BWS operates the only shelter in the city available to battered women, offering them temporary stays up to 30 days if space is available at the time of the request. There are also two shelters outside the city boundaries that accept city residents. Agencies that work with domestic violence victims – especially those whose role begins immediately after incidents such as law enforcement, emergency room personnel, and Domestic Violence Responders (described below) – rely on the BWS as a resource for emergency shelter for their clients. Agencies that enter the picture after the incident also work with the BWS to discuss the status of soon-to-be-discharged victims, or to access other services on behalf of their clients. Additional services offered by the BWS include two 24-hour hotlines where victims can receive information and referrals, a food bank, counseling, court advocacy, training in getting and keeping jobs, access to a medical clinic, and legal advice. The BWS is represented on the DVCC by various staff members who are interested and available for meetings.

Batterer Counseling Programs: Office of Community Corrections, Domestic Violence Interventions, Catholic Charities, and Behavioral Health Authority

In the study city, all cases involving misdemeanor domestic violence are heard at the juvenile and domestic court. Defendants, especially first time offenders, are often allowed to have their cases dismissed if within two years they complete a batterer counseling program managed by the

Family Violence Prevention Program. This condition can also be a component of sentences. Offenders required to cooperate with FVPP must report to the FVPP Social Worker Specialist based at court for an assessment of their counseling needs. Based on the assessment results, they are placed in one of the many batterer treatment programs available. Once placed in a program, a FVPP case manager monitors each offender's compliance with the court order.

Several agencies and individuals run batterer groups, which focus on either domestic violence, anger management, or substance abuse. Domestic Violence Interventions, Behavioral Health Authority, the Office of Community Corrections, and Catholic Charities all offer groups, as do several licensed individuals. Many of these agencies are represented on the DVCC including Domestic Violence Interventions and Catholic Charities.

Most groups charge attendees \$10 or \$15 a session; however, groups offered by the Office of Community Corrections (OCC) are free allowing indigent batterers to fulfill their court-imposed obligation. Groups are held all over the city and at various times of day and day of week, giving batterers every opportunity to find a group.

Department of Social Services (DSS)

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is a large agency that provides many direct services including all types of counseling and assistance with obtaining food stamps and other legal and financial aid. DSS houses two units that focus on domestic and family violence, the Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP), and the Domestic Violence Responders Unit. Several staff persons from the Family Violence Prevention program participate in the DVCC including the unit supervisor and the two court workers.

The majority of the FVPP – approximately eight workers and a supervisor – is based at the main Social Services building in the heart of downtown. Workers at this location assist domestic violence victims who have been referred to the unit from court, police, or other units at social services. FVPP workers can assist victims by procuring counseling, legal assistance, moving expenses, emergency food supplies, and many other forms of financial and service aid. In some cases, the FVPP works with victims only once, and in some cases they establish ongoing relationships. As mentioned above, case managers in this unit also monitor the compliance of batterers who have been court ordered to receive treatment.

Two additional FVPP workers are based at juvenile and domestic court. One worker counsels juvenile offenders and their families. The other administers the batterer counseling and monitoring function of the FVPP, which involves assessing the counseling needs of batterers (e.g., anger management, substance abuse, or domestic violence counseling) placing batterers in appropriate programs, and alerting the court of successful completion or non-compliance.

The Domestic Violence Responders unit is a DSS immediate response team headquartered at downtown Social Services with offices in the police precinct buildings. Domestic Violence Responders are social workers who work out of the precinct buildings during evening and nighttime hours and who respond to human services needs. Their primary, but not exclusive, role is responding to domestic violence scenes reported to police.

When called, the Domestic Violence Responders work with police officers to provide the best possible service and assistance to victims by offering victims a range of information and services

depending on each victim's needs. Domestic Violence Responders are able to offer victims vouchers for emergency hotel stays, food, and baby supplies, in addition to crisis counseling and comprehensive information about available services. The Domestic Violence Responders also serve as a link between the victim and the FVPP where victims can obtain more in depth and ongoing assistance.

City Police Department Domestic Violence Related Activities: Training, Response, and Investigation

The city Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency responding to domestic violence in the city. To prepare its officers for this role, the department provides training in the proper handling of domestic violence calls as part of the regular academy recruit training. This training takes up one day of the 29-week academy and includes: presentations by local domestic violence services agencies on what each offers to victims and how officers can mobilize these resources; proper procedure for responding to domestic violence calls; and training on the laws relating to domestic violence in the state.

From 1997 through 1998, federal funds were utilized to train officers on new laws mandating a pro-arrest policy for domestic violence incidents. This training focused on identifying the primary physical aggressor and covered changes in the laws pertaining to Emergency Protective Orders. This was the last time a department-wide in-service domestic violence training has been conducted. Currently police supervisors or representatives from the Domestic Violence

Responder program occasionally conduct roll-call trainings for patrol officers, addressing procedural issues pertaining to the handling of domestic violence calls.

In addition, during 1997 and 1998, the police department received a COPS office grant in a coordinated effort with the FVPP, the prosecutor's office, and the BWS to develop a domestic violence training video for police officers, a video explaining the court process for victims, and two public service announcements. This training video is still in use at the police recruit training academy, and the public service announcements receive occasional television air-time, though funds are not available to run the announcements regularly. Although several agencies own copies of the video geared toward steering victims through the court process, such as the BWS, Victim Witness, and the Police Department, no one could say definitively how often the video is actually shown to victims.

To further assist victims, as discussed above, the police department collaborates with the local Department of Social Services on the Domestic Violence Responder program. This involves training officers on the functions of the Domestic Violence Responders and encouraging officers to call them out in relevant situations. The department also provides Domestic Violence Responders office space in several of the patrol division headquarters. When the Domestic Violence Responders do not respond with police, officers give victims referrals to a variety of resources in the community.

Domestic violence incident investigation is officially handled by the Police Department's Youth and Family Crime Unit. This unit is charged with reviewing domestic violence reports and

following up in particularly serious cases, or in cases where officers may not have taken the appropriate action, (e.g., if the case indicated an arrest should have been made and it was not). A supervisor and five detectives staff the unit whose purview includes investigating crimes committed by juveniles as well as those classified as domestic violence. Because juvenile offenses are prioritized above domestic offenses, however, and because the capacity of this unit is limited, domestic violence incidents are rarely investigated. Any follow-up with victims is most often handled by the police officers called to the scene who do so of their own accord. Recognizing the importance of thorough investigation and follow up with victims, several interviewees within the police department stated that a full-time domestic violence investigative unit would be immensely beneficial for all involved.

The Youth and Family Crime Unit is able to review domestic violence cases by examining the domestic and family violence reports that are sent through the office on the way to archiving. These forms can be used to alert the unit supervisor to cases warranting further follow-up, but as discussed above, it is unclear how many or how extensively cases are investigated. The police department currently maintains no system for tracking domestic violence cases, offenders, or victims outside of its normal record keeping procedures.

Domestic Violence Working Relationships within the Service Community

Being the first responders to domestic violence incidents, police officers interact with medical, hospital, social service, and shelter personnel, as well as workers at the Emergency Protective Order issuing authority. During case follow-up, police provide and share information with prosecutors. Clearly, the police are integral to domestic violence response and case handling

for assessing the inter-connectedness of those agencies represented in our interviewee sample. The more frequently agencies are mentioned in unprompted, self-reported working relationships, the more likely they are at the center of the service delivery web. Indeed, we found that several agencies received markedly more mentions than others. The tally of these responses is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Reported Domestic Violence Working Relationships by Agency

Agency	Mentions
Battered Women's Shelter	10
City Police Department	8
FVPP (DSS counseling and services for victims)	8
City Prosecutor's Office	4
Domestic Violence Lobbying and Education	4
(Others)	(1, 2 or 3)

Based on the number of mentions, the city Police Department, the Department of Social Services, and the Battered Women's Shelter, appear to be the central agencies in the service delivery community.

Perceptions of the Police Department

No police representatives were observed participating in the DVCC until the latter part of the period of observation and data collection for this study, and in his interview, the chief expressed lack of interest in police participation in the DVCC on the grounds that it was not a constructive use of officer time. He was doubtful that such organizations are truly collaborative when it comes to the police, remarking:

Usually collaboration means, 'what else can we find for you to do as police officers?' All the people who sit around the table and talk about solving problems close up shop at 5:00, 5:30, but the police are open when the domestic violence incidents are going on. Everyone else is closed. It would be a true collaboration if the people with all the ideas

would come out at 3:00 am and see if their ideas work for the police department like they think."

In the DVCC's heyday, however, the city police department's view of collaborative efforts was quite the opposite. In fact, it was a police captain interested in improving the police department's handling of domestic violence who was most responsible for the close working relationship between the department and the DVCC. At that time, the police department realized that something needed to be done to curb the escalating rate of domestic violence-related homicides in the city. With the approval and support of the previous police chief, the DVCC planned and implemented training for all city police officers on new domestic violence laws and developed a family violence form to be completed and submitted for all domestic violence calls for purposes of uniformity and tracking. This commitment on the part of the police department was frequently cited by former DVCC members and others as one reason for the DVCC's success in its formative years, and conversely why without police department support the DVCC faltered in later years.

Perceived commitment of the police department to domestic violence

Interviewees repeatedly expressed the belief that the police department's absence in the DVCC hampered its effectiveness as well as coordinated domestic violence service delivery in general. To the question, "How would you rate the level of collaboration around domestic violence within the city," one interviewee responded, "Everyone but the police is doing a good job." When asked about the extent of collaboration between her agency and the police department another interviewee answered "not at all."

Many interviewees expressed frustration that there is not a police department representative who regularly attends meetings or participates in any way on the DVCC. One interviewee commented, “On all the other domestic violence council meetings I have attended (in two surrounding counties) there is always a police officer there discussing recent cases, and how they could have been prevented, or what they feel the needs are in the community.” Other interviewees related a general sense of disconnection between the police department and their agency and felt that this would be mitigated if someone from the department participated in the DVCC. Many interviewees reported having a much better working relationship with the police department in the past.

Lack of inter-agency communication and absence of police representation on the DVCC were the main collaboration-related concerns expressed by non-police interviewees. Many of these interviewees expressed the opinion that inter-agency communication in general is lacking with the police department. Several commented that this lack of communication perpetuates continued misunderstandings among agencies about their respective roles and purviews. An interviewee from a local agency talked about the intersection between her work and that of the police department. She articulated one issue about working with the police in this way, “There is a lack of trust from the police about our project, and people fear what will make them look bad. Police don’t want to participate [in this project] – they just don’t trust the process, and they are afraid they are going to be blamed. This could be improved if the police would give us the information we ask for more consistently.”

When asked about collaboration one non-police department interviewee mentioned not getting statistics from the police anymore and expressed a general sense of disconnectedness in this way:

I would like to get some statistics from the PD, on 911 calls, arrest rates, and conviction rates from the courts. It would help to know if there are changes in police policies and protocols on handling DV cases. Years ago, the DVCC got all of those reports from the police. We had access to forms that police filled out when they went out on a DV call, so we could screen the sheets and see what arrests were made, and if an arrest was not made, we could question that. I don't know who takes care of those forms now, because they were bounced around from agency to agency. That was when the PD representative was very involved and gave us whatever we needed. We don't get anything any more...I'm not sure what the police are doing now. I don't know if they are giving out those cards to victims, if they are filling out those reports, if the reports go anywhere, if there is any follow-up. When the police do go out and write a report is anyone screening them? Is anyone gathering any information from those reports to write a comprehensive report? I don't have a clue how well they are doing their job, or what they are doing. I do know that we haven't done enough to protect women, and the laws are not utilized the way they were meant to be."

This interviewee went on to say, "a true collaboration really exists only among three city agencies – the Police Department, Department of Social Services, and the court. If they are the only ones collaborating, is that true collaboration? Where are the checks and balances with that system, and who makes sure it works? Collaboration exists, but it is questionable as to how well it works."

Lack of involvement with the DVCC in particular and lack of inter-agency collaboration in general is one of several observations leading to the opinions of many interviewees that the police department's commitment to domestic violence is not what it should be. Interviewees reported that, "domestic violence is not a priority for the police."

A representative from another local law enforcement agency noted that city police department representatives never attend domestic violence training or other relevant events. This source

states: “If you are going to do this work, it is imperative that you attend some of these functions, to make contacts, and be able to use those to offer resources to your victims.”

For some non-police department interviewees, the fact that the police department does not have a dedicated domestic violence unit formed their impression that the department’s commitment to domestic violence is lacking. Interviewees mentioned three main functions that such a unit would serve: (1) expand the department’s capacity to investigate and thoroughly handle domestic violence incidents, (2) provide better services to victims, and (3) provide criminal justice agencies, service delivery agencies, and individuals with a point of contact within the department to direct questions and concerns related to domestic violence as well as to police response in general. While the Youth and Family Crime Unit previously discussed is meant to serve at least some of these roles, in reality it does not.

All interviewees were asked whether they thought establishing a domestic violence unit would be a positive thing, and 21 out of 23 – including four police personnel – stated unequivocally that it was a good idea. Notably, many interviewees offered that while it was a good idea, they entertained little hope that the police department would establish such a unit. One interviewee felt that funding for such positions was possible to obtain and expressed frustration that the department was not making any efforts to procure such funding.

While interviewees felt that a domestic violence unit would be ideal, it was thought that it would be beneficial to have even one person in the police department dedicated to domestic violence or

at least designated as a contact person. A representative from an agency that works closely with the police stated:

[Establishing a domestic violence unit] would definitely be a positive thing...if not a specialized unit, at least someone who could be a liaison in the department for exactly that purpose. For instance, right now in the department there is one particular person who deals with fugitives from other states. If you have questions, that is your contact. It is not a whole unit, but everyone knows who to go to on that issue.

Non-police interviewees did mention one sergeant that seems to serve as an ad-hoc contact person. This sergeant's only domestic violence-related task is training, but his current assignment (detective in auto-theft unit) has taken him out of the "domestic violence loop." Our interviewees were unaware of anyone who can officially or unofficially fill that void. One interviewee stated, "I don't know who to call, where to go – no point of contact." A representative of an agency whose work is directly linked to the police department felt that a liaison between her agency and the Police Department would improve communication. She felt that increased communication would allow her office to better address some concerns expressed by officers about obtaining warrants, as well as making the police department's role clearer. For want of a contact within the department, one interviewee who works with batterers leaves messages on the "crime stoppers" line when she gets intelligence about, for example, a batterer in possession of a firearm.

Police Department's Response to Domestic Violence Calls for Service

In addition to these concerns about the level of collaboration with city agencies and organizations (including the DVCC) and the perceived level of commitment to domestic violence by the police, interviewees also had concerns about how the police handled domestic violence calls. Although none of our questions pertained specifically to the city officers' responses to

domestic violence calls, several interviewees offered comments on this topic. A representative from a law enforcement agency whose jurisdiction overlaps the city police department's jurisdiction mentioned that differences in the way officers in the two departments are trained to handle domestic violence presents a challenge, because in the interviewee's opinion, less domestic violence follow-through is expected of city police officers. Apparently, confusion sometimes results when officers of both agencies respond to the same call since they have different views of what action is required, with city police officers usually opting for less action.

Regarding the presumptive arrest policy in place in the city, there was unanimous support among the police and civilian interviewees alike for this policy, although enthusiasm varied.

Commenting on whether or not the policy has a positive or negative effect on victims, one non police interviewee stated: "The victims feel reassured that the police do care and are listening."

Although many civilian interviewees were aware of the law, several expressed doubt about the zeal and consistency with which city police officers actually carry it out. One interviewee stated, "It depends on the officer. Some take it seriously and go by the book, while others just blow it off." She associated inconsistent application of the policy with lack of discipline in the ranks, stating, "The officers need to be held accountable for their actions, which really speak to their respect for the chief and his authority. They ignore an executive order from him when they don't arrest."

Other interviewees were generally pleased with their relationship with the police, although interviewees acknowledged there was room for improvement. In the eyes of one DSS worker, "There is still an invisible barrier between the police department and the DSS in general. We

meet some resistance about becoming a part of an investigation because we are Social Services and not police officers. There is an attitude of ‘why do we need a social worker...’ Some feel it is redundant to have a second person present at the interview.”

Several interviewees believed that the Domestic Violence Responders program has greatly enhanced the working relationship between the police and DSS. One interviewee commented, “We work well together, and they treat us like family – they call us to come to community events and police training.” Another interview reflected, “That they have opened the divisions to us is pretty incredible. The sharing of information and the level of trust is very good, and it works both ways. The division commanders are wonderful and are very receptive to our suggestions.”

Finally, interviewees repeatedly expressed the opinion that the city police officers need more training in handling domestic violence cases. The following are some of the comments made by non-police interviewees regarding training:

- “Get the police more training.”
- “Now when I go to the police department they say, ‘oh no, not another domestic violence training. We’ve had enough training.’ They may have had the training, but they are still not doing it right. Domestic violence is not going to go away, and we have to keep pecking at it so we can teach the new blood not to develop the resistance that is dying out with the old.”

Civilian interviewees continually expressed how important they felt police department participation is within the domestic violence service delivery system. For example, one interviewee stated, “We share information – often they can find out things I can’t, like whether someone has a criminal record. By working with the police, we provide better victim services by coordinating our response. We help the police understand the victims’ perspectives, and they

help us with the legal issues.” A representative from one agency put it this way, “The police have greater access to the public than we do. If an officer goes with me to a home, the person is more likely to talk to me than if I went alone.”

The above discussion summarizes the views of the police department’s response to domestic violence expressed through interviews by members of the domestic violence service delivery community. The opinions of non-police department interviewees were mixed. All interviewees approved of the department’s presumptive arrest policy, and several spoke of positive working relationships between themselves and police personnel in patrol districts. Others, however, expressed frustration about what they perceived as the department’s lack of commitment to domestic violence. These interviewees pointed to the absence of personnel actively involved in domestic violence case follow-up and investigation, the lack of police department collaboration and communication with other agencies involved in service delivery, and the inconsistency with which officers apply the presumptive arrest policy. Non-police department interviewees also lamented the absence of police involvement in the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee. These interviewees believed that active police department involvement was essential for the inter-agency approach to be effective.

Discussion

Recommendations submitted to the Police Department

Toward the end of the field-work of this project, the police department formed a domestic violence working group, called the “Intimate Partner Initiative,” in partnership with the city prosecutor’s office and several other agencies. The goal of this effort was to reduce the number of

intimate partner homicides through increased timely prosecutions and increased public awareness about intimate violence and available assistance. In doing so, the initiative was to make a strong point to offenders that the city is taking intimate violence offences seriously.

The Intimate Partner Initiative began meeting and drawing up a plan for implementing the changes deemed necessary to pursue these goals. A Police Foundation field researcher was invited to attend and subsequently began serving on the committee. After it became clear that the involvement and contributions of this researcher were encouraged, we developed a list of recommendations the department could make to improve intimate violence service delivery that were based on the interview data. This list is attached as an Appendix to this chapter. The recommendations fell into two categories: (1) those that could be implemented quickly and at a low cost, with the anticipation of immediate improved results, such as officers always taking photographs of injuries; and (2) more long-term solutions that may require money or at least additional manpower to implement, (e.g., the formation of a dedicated domestic violence investigative unit, or at the very least appointing a domestic violence point person within the department).

Chapter 5 Appendix

**Recommendations for Police Department Responses
To Personal Violence Between Intimates**



Recommendations for Police Department Responses to Personal Violence between Intimates

March 2001

The following is a summary list of recommendations that may inform the work of the Interpersonal Violence Reduction Team. It is based on domestic violence research conducted by the Police Foundation for the COPS Office of the Department of Justice. This work included interviews with police personnel in [study city] and elsewhere; interviews with officials from other community agencies; and a review of good practice from other areas.

The recommendations are in two categories: (A) Simple, tangible, quick-return interventions, and (B) Longer-term measures.

A. Quick-return interventions

1. **Monitored use of photographic evidence.** Photographic evidence of violence can significantly increase the chances of batterers' guilty pleas at court. The PD might consider requiring photos to be taken as a follow-up, a few days after a violent incident when bruising is more visible. This should be monitored to ensure implementation.
2. **Provision of information to victims.** A card or leaflet listing current referral numbers could be adopted for mandatory distribution at incidents of domestic interpersonal violence. Officers would explain the resources and encourage victims to use them. The Second Responders have thousands of copies of a leaflet containing pertinent information for victims: numbers for hotlines, police precincts, social services, the YWCA, and more, which might be used or adapted for these purposes.
3. **Consistent use of dedicated 911 cell phones for victims.** Recent technological developments mean that victims known to be at high risk can receive a prioritized, informed and incident-specific response from the police. Procedures/protocol to allow identification of high-risk victims, use and return of cell phones, and monitoring of use and responses, would facilitate this intervention.
4. **Involvement with the Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee.** Routine PD participation would facilitate communication between agencies, and improve information sharing on policies, procedures, and cases. The aim would be to enhance service delivery to victims and offenders by all agencies involved. The PD would benefit from the cooperation and information from other agencies and from the kudos of consulting the community on these issues.

B. Longer-term measures.

1. **A dedicated Domestic Violence Unit, Detectives, and/or Point Person.** Due to the size of the intimate interpersonal violence problem, larger cities often have a specialized Domestic Violence Unit, dedicated domestic violence detectives, and a liaison person to work with agencies and the community:
 - A dedicated Unit could perhaps incorporate much of this work. It would need to be sufficiently staffed, and managed at a senior level (perhaps Deputy Chief) to avoid marginalization of domestic violence within the department.
 - Specialized Detectives could respond to and monitor cases from first call through investigation and prosecution. They could provide follow-up services with victims, monitor repeat offenders, and monitor police response (consistent adherence to policies and procedure).
 - A domestic violence Point Person could be appointed as a liaison with and contact point for other agencies and the community.
2. **Improved and consistent training for all police officers.** Training should include understanding the needs and viewpoints of victims (to avoid 'revictimization') and familiarity with available resources (to better inform victims). All officers should understand criteria by which an arrest should be made. The department could require officers to carry a card listing these criteria, and require them to consult it at domestic violence incidents.
3. **Continual Monitoring of pro-arrest policies.** Monitoring and control checks is a mechanism that can improve compliance with policy and consistency of application. Creating and maintaining a database of PD 109 Forms (and checking to ensure they are completed for all domestic violence calls) would facilitate this. The compliance of individual officers and the PD as a whole can then be monitored.
4. **A domestic violence database.** Such a database could allow tracking of repeat callers, addresses, victims, and offenders. It could also allow cross-referencing between persons and places as well as being used to inform responding officers of the relevant history and information. Social Services have an existing database that may inform this work.

There is a range of literature available on many of these subjects and others, addressing police responses to domestic violence. The Police Foundation would be happy to supply the Interpersonal Violence Reduction Team with copies of relevant articles upon request.