



**Domestic Violence  
and the Community's Response**

**Missed Opportunities**

**Central West Region**

**December 11 2009**

# HOW ARE WE DOING? WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL?

## INTER-REGIONAL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### WATERLOO REGION

- Domestic Violence Community Coordinating Committee/Domestic Assault Review Team (DART) with broad representation from various sectors
- Community interaction is very important
- Coordinate Neighbours Friends & Families (NFF) Initiative through Domestic Assault Review Team (DART)
- Crisis response – outreach worker from the shelter; legal aid certificate
- K-W/Cambridge Family Violence Project
  - multi-service centre/one-stop shop for managing situations of violence against women/collocation of services for victims and abusers – crown, counselling, police, victim services, CAS
  - relationships among agencies have improved
  - clients able to select which services they wish to be involved with; provides supportive environment for women; creates more accountability – rather than just referring to service and closing the file; offers space to discuss high-risk cases
  - all requests for couple counselling are split files and assessed for domestic violence; no couple counselling done if suspicion exists; P&P or CAS are contacted if appropriate
  - number of abused women has sky-rocked
- If rejected from PAR program, good at doing direct referral, engage resistant men, collaborate with CAS workers, organize case conferences
- Spend much time in engaging men; very low drop-out rate
- Trying to get information to perpetrator for their support
- CAS engaging men to make them active members of their own plan (strength-based approach – what can they do to keep their family safe)
- CAS specialized DV team goes out when a case is open if domestic violence has been identified on intake (co-facilitate Caring Dads with JHS; co-facilitate groups with shelter; emphasis on engaging men especially with barriers in community; part of DART and office at Family Violence Project; men's crisis cards; specialized DV teams create link between services, especially in rural communities)
- Partnership with CAS for "healthy relationships"
- Better representation in high-risk committees/confidentiality limits what can be discussed

- Need cards of providers/overloaded with services/need to share information
- PO system is flawed
- K-W SASC MAASV program for men

## **WELLINGTON COUNTY**

- Strong Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Response Protocol (24 agencies) with a focus on:
  - Consistent first response
  - Risk assessment
  - Ensuring confidentiality
  - Hospital offered to everyone but optional
  - Safety planning
  - Referral to VAW and CAS if appropriate
  - High-risk response/referral to partners
  - Three-pronged approach to high-risk (high-risk team; DVRS committee; community partner consultation)
  - Follow-up support is important
  - Shared service model which includes some collocation of services
  - Whole community plus now putting HR team in place
- Lack on contact between PO and CAS
- CAS Guelph – feel CAS and shelter workers have a strained relationship (combined training)
- Guelph animal rescue – will take animals two weeks for free
- Bail notification process – notifies client of what took place in bail court
- Victim services –access to bail conditions, input, etc.
- Integrity checks to check on surety to see if accused is still living where he should be
- VSOP-Wellington – CPTED Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
  - Safety planning – ability to assess building/home/park to see if it is safe; certified by OPP, e.g., outside of home, extend privacy to allow for security, i.e., fencing, trees, lighting

## **PEEL REGION**

- Bail notification process – notifies client of what took place in bail court
- Bail Program
  - One comment stating - not sure bail safety program in place
- DART (includes school boards)
- Legal Advisory Team
- DVERS committee
- Domestic Court Advisory Committee/Court Program
  - Developing training opportunities on domestic violence for crowns and judges and meeting monthly to share stats
- MAG had HR team – DV court co-leads and police
- Victim services – access to bail conditions, input, etc.
- Peel Police
  - 450 occurrences/unit/month
  - looking at high-risk unit;
  - domestic violence courts with dedicated judges, crowns
  - complete risk assessment and a risk assessment coordinator
  - full-time domestic violence police coordinator
  - set-up network to access services
- VOTS Peel – violent offender tracking system to track serial offenders
- Case conference (victim services; DVERS; Housing; South Asian enrichment program)
- Developing co-location program for service
- Safer Families Program (CAS and family service agencies collaborate to provide a joint safety/clinical assessment)
  - CFSPD offering PARs in partnership with Safer Families program
- PCHS – family based counselling; providing different counselling opportunities to each member of the family (moms, dads, children); ethno-specific program
- PCAWA (multi-sectoral collaborative to provide advocacy, education, policy direction in the area of domestic violence – need to measure the impact – also provide domestic violence training from a feminist, anti-racist, anti-oppressive perspective)
- Case management – agreement with mom is essential/formal consent to share is signed
- Collaborative CAS/VAW agreement to report to each other; regular training on intersection points
- Safety planning and CAS communication
- Some agencies lack communication with the CAS
- Some agencies attacking the root, e.g., class, race and how she is treated by the system (AR/AO); how do we meet the needs of women?

- Need more legal advocacy for children; need better relations with office of children

## **HALTON REGION**

- Dedicated domestic violence police team
- Open CAS files in name of person who was charged
- Bridging Families Program (CAS/Shelter collaborative)
- Shelter does Halton Police training

## **DUFFERIN COUNTY**

- Collaboration of services
- DART (Domestic Assault Review Team)
  - Look at gaps in services / collaboration through DART
  - Police, probation, crown, shelter, CAS, VWAP, victim services, hospital
- Several different police services but collaborate well and have high-risk review team (Justice only)
- Surety is required to watch video on domestic violence specific and ask crown to include "door-knocks" in probation order

## COMMUNITIES NOT IDENTIFIED

- Probation office works together with victims services
- Committee involved in providing resources, making sure resources are updated, and making referrals
- Crown attorney, police, and probation are delegated to be on a high-risk team that determines a person as high risk and creates a safety plan; issues come to the attention of this team when the person re-offends
- Ministry policy that anyone who commits a domestic violence act must attend a domestic violence group; not just anger management
- Barrier – if someone is not able to continue in a domestic violence program/group, they can be referred to individual counselling. This is a barrier because counselling is not funded and the person can be forced to pay for the counselling. If the person cannot afford counselling, they are sent to anger management which is often not seen as effective
- Court order to attend and participate; if this is breached, then an arrest is made
- New generation is far more aware of inappropriate relationships
- If denial is seen as an indicator of risk, then mandatory program is needed, i.e., drunk driving charge = drug/alcohol programming... charge of domestic violence = mandatory PARs
- According to the Death Review Committee, the mental health professional and counselling agency were more aware of the high-risk women and lowest awareness being shelters – general counselling agencies need to change their ways of assessing
- Criminal and Family Courts still major problems
- Domestic Violence Registry in England and California – accessible to the public
- Engaging non-service provider community members for change
- Strangulation Awareness training
- Victim Services provides safety planning, helps police, receives a lot of the paper work, follow-up

# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN CENTRAL WEST REGION TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INQUEST?

## COMMENTS FROM WORKSHOP EVALUATIONS

### Education & Awareness

- More outreach re: Jared's case
- More public education and awareness of domestic violence (4)
- Better education regarding early signs of domestic violence
- Improved education and prevention
- New materials, research shared with all agencies
- More funding to implement recommendations targeting education regarding oppression and racism in domestic violence
- Awareness of services so persons experiencing emotional, verbal domestic violence seek out help before it escalates
- Spread the message
- If people hear and see what the victims face, change is possible
- Training
- More money and training to people doing the work
- Have more interactive workshops like this one
- Education of judges, CAS, and other service providers to provide seamless service
- Education/training of justices of the peace and judges (4)
- Training for decision-makers (judges, police) re domestic violence, trauma
- Education/work around domestic violence issues within the judiciary

### System Coordination/Responsiveness

- Working collaboratively with community partners
- Use the high-risk team models to help increase communication between all services supporting families (confidentiality should be helpful not hindering)
- Listen!
- Build bridges between services to support all individuals
- Various agencies need to work effectively together with the justice system in order to provide safety and security for victims of domestic violence

- Commitment from local agencies to think outside the box (in some cases)
- More collaboration between services
- Personal and agency commitment to collaborate and to educate others
- More responsiveness to women by agencies when they are seeking information on their partners' participation in PAR, probation, VWAP, police, etc.
- Allow/encourage contact between VAW counselling and the partner's probation order, PAR, etc.
- Join services together – better communication
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Utilize our current protocol with 24 partners in Guelph to implement suggestions
- Coordination of services including co-location practice
- Collaboration within region
- Look at the whole family system and who violence affects – one cannot just fix the perpetrator; have to assess the effect of all aspects of the family system
- Increased communication/collaboration between service providers
- Coordinate/collaborate services so that they are connecting the information and talking to each other
- More accountability within systems
- CAS/VAW overhaul – protocol for differential response
- Provide services immediately after the first step
- Coordinate or share information
- Enhanced collaboration
- Better coordination between different departments – parole, PARs, justice, women's services, CAS

## **Justice System**

- Judges providing stiffer sentences
- Probation breaches
- Domestic Violence Unit
- Access visit centres for children
- Supervised access orders mandatory when woman abuse is present
- Legal advocacy for children
- More serious consequences for breaches of court orders (recognizance of bail, probation, conditional sentence orders, peace bonds)
- Listen to the victims



- Connection between family court and criminal court
- Breaches of probation should be severely addressed
- Changes in legal system (court, family law, and criminal law)
- Victims first!
- Holding of offenders who breach orders
- Specialized team of Domestic Violence crowns
- More accountability for peace bond clients
- Criminal records need to follow into Family Court
- Legal advocates standard
- Hold offenders responsible
- Have the judiciary attend (crowns, judges, and family and defense lawyers need to have more involvement)

### **Services for Perpetrators**

- Additional support for the offender
- Advocacy for programming and new services
- Community to develop lethality assessment rather than each agency having their own, i.e., VAW, police, VWAP, etc.
- More support for men
- CAS files opened under fathers names too
- Tracking needs to improve, i.e., CAS files open under perpetrator's name
- PAR evaluations should be available to judges in case of re-offence is prior PAR involvement
- Shift the focus on interventions on the perpetrator to analyze prosecutions and obtain measurable evidence that he is changing
- PARs overhaul
- Compulsory PARs

### **Risk Assessment**

- One risk assessment tool
- High-risk team/committee (3)
- Identifying perpetrators (along with women and children) and provide support services and accountability for her risk assessment
- Risk assessments
- Risk assessment committee
- Coordinated, comprehensive multi-service planning and communication for high-risk cases
- High-risk team in Peel

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? STOP, START, MAINTAIN

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

STOP	START	MAINTAIN
<b>Dufferin</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Volunteering for teams to create protocol and collaboration: needs to be paid</li> <li>○ Training on personal time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Services to men (i.e., counselling)</li> <li>○ Adapt services in under-served areas with growing populations</li> <li>○ Reduce waitlist for VAW counselling</li> <li>○ High risk team</li> <li>○ Advocacy: funding</li> <li>○ Common risk assessment process</li> <li>○ Better training for police services</li> <li>○ Provincial standard forms for domestic violence and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaboration – DART, VAW and CAS</li> </ul>
<b>Halton</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Immigrant women with no status</li> <li>○ Women having to go door to door depending on needs</li> <li>○ Peace bonds and dual charges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High-risk teams</li> <li>○ Focus on perpetrator, not on victim</li> <li>○ Sharing information between criminal and family court</li> <li>○ San Diego model – one-stop shop</li> <li>○ Domestic violence advisory training and resources for judges, crowns, justices of the peace, family court lawyers</li> <li>○ Designated domestic violence crowns</li> <li>○ Holding individuals accountable after breaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain high-risk teams in place</li> <li>○ Advocate for information sharing</li> <li>○ CAS: training around domestic violence cases, police</li> <li>○ PAR, Caring Dads</li> <li>○ Family, individual counselling and healing networks</li> </ul>
<b>Wellington</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children's Aid should stop putting files under mothers name</li> <li>○ Assuming that programs in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Domestic violence registry</li> <li>○ Support for victims of sexual abuse (children)</li> <li>○ Sureties – more accountable for assuring person is complying with orders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ DVERS</li> <li>○ High-Risk Team</li> <li>○ Victim Services – bail notification</li> <li>○ Domestic Violence Action</li> </ul>

<b>STOP</b>	<b>START</b>	<b>MAINTAIN</b>
<p>are what people need – client centred approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Confidentiality should help not hinder – should not be a barrier to partnerships for safety</li> <li>○ If you breach you don't get bail or PARS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Criminal court before family court</li> <li>○ Domestic violence court in Guelph</li> <li>○ Including domestic violence paper work in pre-sentence report</li> <li>○ Home checks to determine new relationships</li> <li>○ Domestic violence training for JPs and judges</li> <li>○ Security in family court</li> <li>○ Improving services for marginalized communities (easier access to interpreters)</li> <li>○ Educational services for boys</li> </ul>	<p>Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public education</li> <li>○ Support Link</li> <li>○ Partnership with media</li> <li>○ Rural outreach</li> </ul>
<b>Peel</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High-risk team in Peel</li> <li>○ Establish a team for custody court (both in Peel and Waterloo)</li> <li>○ Greater support and understanding needs to be established on behalf of women who are victims of domestic violence</li> <li>○ DVERS program – allow alarms to have a further range – provide better protection for women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaboration among agencies</li> <li>○ The collaborations are great however it would be beneficial for all the individual committees to come together to form one general committee</li> </ul>
<b>Waterloo</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Isolating men who abuse because violence happens in isolation</li> <li>○ Ignoring warning signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Get more information from crown about domestic violence cases i.e., crown briefs, risk assessments, synopsis and charge history</li> <li>○ Exchange information between agencies of MAG and community safety</li> <li>○ Contact with partner – should be mandated that agencies are provided in partner contact information – currently inconsistency in receiving partner contact information and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain (or increase) current funding to PAR programs</li> <li>○ Lutherwood – maintain current note-taking procedures (fact based)</li> <li>○ Child focus at supervised exchange places (no</li> </ul>

<b>STOP</b>	<b>START</b>	<b>MAINTAIN</b>
	<p>incomplete referrals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Open CAS files in name of person charged (not only moms)</li> <li>○ Lutherwood supervised access – needs more funding to provide better service – more consistent hours</li> <li>○ Piece together patters of behaviour and feelings</li> <li>○ Acknowledge the humanity of people who harm others</li> <li>○ Ensure staff and volunteers have the information and support they need to do the work, including training on taking notes</li> <li>○ Consider including a restrictive justice approach as an element of healing and accountability</li> <li>○ Teaching moms and dads about how to talk to their children about domestic violence and separation</li> <li>○ Taking women's desperation seriously (can sound like hysteria)</li> <li>○ Mandatory domestic violence training for judiciary</li> <li>○ Start handing out NFF information in Halloween treat bags</li> <li>○ Teaching about domestic violence in schools (mandatory not elective)</li> </ul>	<p>further harm/trauma – best interest of child)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Child refusal policy – If child says no to visit 3 times they do not need to return</li> <li>○ More supervised visits in domestic violence cases (easier to take away supervision that add it later)</li> <li>○ Unlimited access to supervised exchanges and visits as needed</li> <li>○ Community awareness of domestic violence and how to respond to it</li> <li>○ Keep doing these presentations to people and professionals</li> </ul>

**Dec 11, 2009**

**9 am-4 pm**

Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre  
700 Hespeler Rd, Cambridge N3H 5L8

RSVP by Dec. 7th

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Brought to you by:

Violence Against Women Service System Forum  
for Central West Region

**Domestic Violence and the Community's Response**

# Missed Opportunities

**Reviewing the situation leading to the murder  
of J.O. (age 8) and his dad's death in Brantford**

**Missed Opportunities and Lessons Learned**

**Community Conversations:  
Interventions that Reduce the Risk**

No fee.

Cancellations required 48 hours in advance.

Workshop funded by  
K-W Counselling Services  
in partnership with the  
Ministry of Community and Social Services

This session will be of special interest and value to Violence Against Women and CAS service providers, as well as Probation, Parole, PAR Programs, Crown Attorneys, Supervised Access and all others working together to prevent intimate partner abuse in Central West Region.