

**Meeting Start:** 10:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** Karen Diebolt (Chief State's Attorney), Joseph DiTunno (Judicial Branch-Court Support Services Division), Linda Kendrick (DOC), Karen Jarmoc (CCADV), Merit Lajoie (Office of the Victim Advocate), A. Stephen Lanza (Family ReEntry, Inc.), Regina Owusu (Department of Public Health), Mary Painter (Department of Children and Family), David Rentler (Board of Pardons and Paroles), and Nancy Turner (CCADV)

1.) Welcome by Chair Karen Jarmoc

2.) Review of Meeting Minutes from October 10, 2013. Edits to be submitted to Nancy Turner.

3.) Discussion of Offender Assessment Tools- review of draft summary of various agency tools. Tools are each "normed" for different populations. Each agency provided overview of tools used and purpose.

- Court Support Services Division- Pre-trial assessment focus is on person's risk/likelihood to re-offend; on probation the assessment tool is normed for the offenders needed level of supervision. High scoring offenders usually have their cases sent for prosecution. Probationers typically score high. The DVSI-R is informed by at least 3 of 5 possible sources to be considered valid. Aside from static questions it involves a detailed assessment of the offender.
- Department of Children and Families- uses a non-validated tool. Use Advanced Behavioral Health for credentialing those assessing offending parents.
- Department of Correction does not have a screening tool. Currently screen informally using police reports and rap sheet. Pre-Sentence Investigationa (by Family Relations) are used together with clinical judgment. Assessments are done with new inmates at the Intake Center at Walker by Population Management staff.
- Board of Pardons and Paroles- took CSSD's data to analyze and validate the DVSI-R for use with the incarcerated population. Level of risk information can help triage inmates and delineate between risk levels
- Law Enforcement- Lethality Assessment Program as part of on-scene response to serious domestic violence offenses. Form attached to police report is discoverable once it is received by prosecution. ODARA is a Canadian too currently in use in Maine by law enforcement. Karen will follow up with CCADV staff looking into this tool as possibly beneficial to prosecutors.

Prosecutors and judges working without standards- need own assessment mechanism to force them to think of risk and case details. Karen Jarmoc expressed concern that prosecutors and judges see the charge of breach of peace as a low risk offense- without viewing the context of the crime/details of the case. Seemingly do not understand the interpersonal dynamics of these crimes. What could help them with decision-making and case management? The idea of prosecutors producing/using their own screening tool to create buy-in around issues of lethality was discussed. If such a screen is the work product of the prosecutor, it does not have to be shared. Need a valid instrument independent of victim input but equally predictive for prosecutors to use.

4.) Joe DiTunno mentioned that without correct use, regular training, and monitoring there can be a drop in validity of the tool. Cautioned about the risk of user fatigue and “model drift” with staff reverting to and inserting professional judgment. Those present reviewed sources used for training on the assessment tools

- CSSD trains once a year with bail, family relations staff and probation. Typically contract with Oliver Williams as instructor.
- DCF holds a training academy quarterly or annually.
- DOC training done at Walker and some at the jail level- that is usually handled by Linda Kendrick. Staff working with women offenders and juveniles (at Manson and York) receives training as often as necessary.

With respect to Explore and Evolve classes for batterers, Steve Lanza shared that providers only get the offenders scores (DVSI-R) not their answers. FVEP facilitators also get the offenders scores. When an offender is in a new relationship, facilitators cannot contact the new partner when there is no new crime and the partner is not the original victim. The DVSI-R is used with offenders a second time upon conviction. It is not re-administered after an offender completes batterer intervention programming. Offenders are given the option to complete a survey anonymously at the end of a BIP class. Steve Lanza expressed interest in being able to measure change over a longer period of time (more than six months). A treatment tool to truly assess change is needed as causal and contributing factors change continuously over time.

#### **5.) State Standards Discussion**

- Joe DiTunno suggested we use care in comparing other states to what CSSD has in place for batterer programming. Connecticut operates differently and CSSD provides oversight.
- In deciding how we want to impact practice, must be aware that some providers will just no longer label themselves as working in batterer intervention programming (to avoid having standards apply to them). Will need to define clearly which programs we are addressing through standards.
- Discussed whether we are looking to apply CSSD’s standards to all providers or to create uniformity and enhanced standards across all providers. The issue of cost implications with the later approach was raised.
- With respect to certification of providers, can look to add professional licensing requirement to the standards of expertise. DPH oversees five profession licenses.
- Suggested we look to identify, as we move through various components to state standards, which carry a potential financial implication.
- Batterer term outdated- may need to speak about “offender accountability”.
- Two things to avoid were highlighted through the conversation: creating another pre-trial option and on-line domestic violence programming for offenders.

#### **Emerging Needs/Recommendations**

1. Group considered a policy recommendation for the Chief State’s Attorney to explore possible assessment tools for use by prosecutors dealing with domestic violence offenders. Look for a toll that can bring in the full scope of factors to be addressed within the case- the “rest of the iceberg”. This could be advanced through the prosecutor roundtables held with advocates.
2. A recommendation emerged about conducting cross-training on tools being used with offenders by various agencies in order to strengthen collaboration and understanding.

### PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Risk assessments to be conducted by prosecutors before granting nolle.
  - a. Needs to not be shared or discoverable
  - b. Must understand what prosecutors see as risk factors
4. Establishment of clear judicial guidelines for offender participation in FVEP, Explore and Evolve programs.
5. Create a lethality bench card for judges.
6. Standardize information all providers must have access to regarding an offender including, but not limited to, police report for current offense.
7. Standardized credentials for providers and determination of entity for vetting professionals.

### Follow Up Actions

1. Steve Lanza to develop a flow chart of decisions concerning offenders as they are made all along the criminal justice process.
2. Nancy Turner will revise the risk assessment comparison chart to include purpose areas (risk, treatment, outcomes).
3. On the outline for standards being developed Nancy Turner will make notations about the components with potential financial implications for providers.
4. Dave Rentler to join the state standards review subcommittee.

**Meeting End:** 11:50 a.m.

**Next Meeting:** November 15, 2013 at 10:00 a.m.