



March 2007

TAILORING OUR RESPONSE

- Michelle Hall with contributions from Tara Keehr, Carver County SAIC Coordinator and Laura Williams, SVJI staff

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Membership in a community helps give individuals an identity in the context of shared characteristics such as belief systems, values, economic status or perceived suppression by the "mainstream" majority. Most people belong to multiple communities that are identified by geographic, economic, cultural and religious boundaries. Such affiliations can strongly influence crime victims' reactions to their victimization. To the extent that the victim sees the community as supportive, compassionate and accepting, membership in that community may be therapeutic. To the extent that the victim sees the community as judgmental, hostile and skeptical, that community is toxic to the crime victim (Koss & Harvey, 1991, p.115).

As practitioners and teams endeavor to be victim-centered in responding to sexual assault victim/survivors in their service area, many teams have chosen to learn more about the communities within their community. For example, the Carver County Sexual Assault Inter-agency Council recently conducted a team training regarding the Hispanic/Latino population led by Carmen and Walter Patino, owners of Golden Tongue Consultants, Inc., a translation and interpreting agency in Glencoe, Minnesota.

The Patinos spoke about the "myths" to be aware of when dealing with Hispanic/Latino people. First, not all Hispanics are here illegally. Second, not all Hispanics speak the same language; some speak Portuguese rather than Spanish. In addition, there are many different dialects in Spanish and the same word may have different meanings depending upon which country the person is from. Third, not all Hispanic immigrants have come to the United States willingly; some may have been victims of human trafficking.

According to the Patinos, it is crucial that persons working with Hispanic victim/survivors attempt to establish a trusting relationship. They suggest it is best to try to reach them through established connections, such as churches, Spanish-speaking radio broadcasts, local Hispanic businesses or employers of large numbers of Hispanics.

The Patinos stated that there are many reasons why a Hispanic victim may not report the crime. One is that the virginity of women is almost religious and the victim's family may consider the victim as damaged goods. Therefore, victims who do report need significant support that may involve

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assistance accessing additional services if they end up being cut off from other supports and resources. If the victim or a family member is undocumented, she or he may fear that reporting the crime will result in deportation. Threats from the perpetrator or his family/friends are also a barrier to reporting sexual assault. At the same time, victims may be hesitant to report, precisely because they fear getting the perpetrator in trouble. Finally, sexual matters are considered to be extremely private in Hispanic culture and may also present another barrier to reporting. Establishing and/or working through trusting relationships can assist professionals in discerning the reasons a specific victim/survivor may have in reporting the crime which will allow them to better address the victim's needs.

They also noted that it's important to be aware that persons from other countries may have little knowledge of the American criminal justice system. Thus, professionals may need to take more time to explain a case process and/or the options present. Language barriers may necessitate the use of interpreters and interviews of a certain age or gender may be necessary to help crime victims feel more comfortable. Another issue may be the crime victim's immigration status. Because victims may illegally reside in this country, the likelihood of reporting a crime may diminish.

The Patinos emphasized to the team that the keys to success in working with Hispanic/ Latino persons are: use of appropriate language, handling fears, appropriate touch, education, support, and most importantly establishing trust.

Ultimately, a key principle for working with a victim/survivor from any distinct population is to listen for the unique concerns they may have. Advance training on the general characteristics of a distinct community or affiliation—whether it be based on age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or beliefs, organizational affiliation (e.g. college, military)—can help provide a frame-

work for individuals and interagency teams to think creatively about options for responding. Such presentations can also provide an opportunity to raise and confront biases that might interfere with our ability to respond well. However, the most effective response will always come from a skilled and knowledgeable responder's ability to listen and understand the unique ways these generalized factors are affecting the individual victim/survivor before them and make an effort to customize their approach accordingly.

There are many ways teams can look to learn from and to incorporate multiple voices and viewpoints into our concept of what it means to be victim-centered. Examples of how other teams have sought to learn more about the communities within their communities can be obtained by contacting Michelle or Laura at the Sexual Violence Justice Institute at 651.209.9993, ext. 203 or 202.

Additional ideas for how to approach developing a team and protocol that can tailor a response to distinct populations can be found in Chapter 2 of *Improving Community Response to Crime Victims* (Boles and Patterson, 1992).

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Safe Harbors Youth Intervention Project

- Donna Dunn

The work of the Sexual Violence Justice Institute and the Protocol Development process has found a new audience in Minnesota! The 2006 Minnesota legislature passed a human trafficking bill which offered, among other things, funding for a focused look at the needs of and response to youth who are vulnerable to being sexually exploited or trafficked. The bill specified that funding was for developing a protocol for addressing this emerging need and was to go to Ramsey County, home of one of the adult protocol development sites, the Sexual Assault Response Team. As the Ramsey County officials looked at the language of the bill Emily Huemann, director of Ramsey County Sexual Offenses Services and member of the SAPT suggested that this youth protocol development should mirror the process which the SAPT used.

After a summer of planning, identifying partners for this work, and gathering support from across the field, the Safe Harbor Youth Intervention Protocol- SHYIP was launched! The SVJI participated in an introductory meeting and ultimately a half-day training for SHYIP participants. The enormous commitment to the issue of youth at risk drew 50 people to the training, which was held in September, 2006. From that date, the group has divided into committees to gather data which will be used to inform the Community Needs Assessment. One committee set the ambitious agenda of holding 19 focus groups with teens, youth workers, school personnel, criminal justice personnel and others to define the problem. To date, 16 of those focus groups have been held. "It has been a privilege to meet with the committed professionals who are working on this issue," notes Emily Huemann, Director of SOS. "I appreciate the opportunity to learn about how the services they provide intersect with this vulnerable population. And the focus groups have provided a wealth of information for the protocol writing process."

The SVJI has stayed connected with the SHYIP as this work moves forward. Among the existing Minnesota protocol sites who have not had funding to approach such a large focus on youth, only the Olmsted County SAIC has done a targeted outreach and community needs assessment addressing adolescent victims. Data would support this work – the rate of sexual assault and exploitation among teens indicates a high level of vulnerability in this age group. The language of the trafficking bill identifies the desire to replicate this protocol in other areas of the state. We know that currently existing protocol sites are well equipped to sail there!

SVJI Gets Changes Made to Judges Criminal Benchbook

- Kaarin Long

The Minnesota State Bar Association's Continuing Legal Education program produces a resource called the Judges Criminal Benchbook. This book is owned by most judges and many prosecutors and defense attorneys as a good outline of Minnesota criminal law.

In the summer of 2005, we at SVJI noticed that there were some errors and omissions in the Benchbook – most notably that, while there was a full chapter on domestic assault and a short chapter on *child* sexual abuse, there was nothing addressing adult and adolescent sexual assault. We contacted the Benchbook committee, who invited us to submit our ideas. We did some research and presented an outline on a few topics to the Benchbook committee.

We are happy to see that many of our suggestions – including an expansion of the sexual assault chapter – were incorporated in the newest edition, out in November of 2006. We hope that our suggestions will help practitioners if judges have a more complete picture of sexual assault legal issues in Minnesota.

SVJI Hired to Train Minnesota Army & Air Guard

- Kaarin Long

Some publicity in recent years has focused on the subject of the treatment of women in the United States Military. Women are still a very small minority within the ranks of the military, but their numbers are growing. The problem of sexual assault and sexual harassment has clearly been identified by all branches of the armed forces – including our own Minnesota Army and Air National Guard.

For this reason, the U.S. Department of Defense outlined a new Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program for all branches of the military. This program has resulted in specific expectations for creating a more victim-centered response to sexual violence, and will hopefully result in more women breaking the traditional silence about this problem.

When the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator for the Minnesota Army Guard began working to develop a Minnesota-specific program, she discovered MNCASA through our website and contacted us. We have been thrilled to be involved over the last year or more to assist them in developing their program, as well as to help develop the trainings that were presented to their personnel. Over the weekend of October 28 & 29, we trained about 35 “first responders” on sexual assault dynamics and law, as well as having them problem-solve their own response to sexual assault.

The weekend of November 18 & 19, we trained hundreds at the command level – the top Non-commissioned Officers and Commissioned Officers – throughout the state of Minnesota. This training was broadcast via video technology to over 50 cities in Minnesota!

We are happy to report that the response we received was wholeheartedly positive. We were very pleased that from the very top Adjutant General all the way through the ranks, the personnel seemed committed to working in a victim-centered way to address and reduce the incidents of sexual violence within our state Guard program.

Kaarin Long to Coordinate on Military Sexual Assault Response

SVJI Staff attorney Kaarin Long was invited to be among six civilians on a nationwide planning committee for the military response to sexual violence. The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape is convening a group of civilian and military personnel to establish relationships with military installations and begin training local, community-based sexual assault advocacy programs on working with survivors of sexual assault in the military.

Ms. Long will attend several meetings, the first of which was in Harrisburg Pennsylvania the third week of February.

Protocol Site Updates

ISANTI COUNTY SAIC

Brenda Skogman, Site Coordinator

Isanti County is currently working on a Community Forum scheduled for late January, early February regarding Internet Crimes Against Children. We continue to update our protocol as needed and are currently updating our hospital protocol to include a portion that relates to "when the sexual assault occurs at the hospital the victim will be offered another hospital". Our main focus right now is getting the forum set up and ready to go so that is what Isanti County's main goal is at the moment.



WINONA COUNTY SAIC

Valerie Williams, Site Coordinator

The Winona County team has been working hard and decided they needed some fun. So on November 28th the team met at Green Mill for a retreat. The morning began with muffins, coffee, and a team building game. During the game it was great to see Law Enforcement and Prosecution working towards the same goal-winning. The team members spent the next hour and a half working through over 20 issues determining the priorities for the year. The team then discussed the next step for the juvenile protocol. Prizes were awarded in cute holiday bags. The morning ended with a delicious lunch.

OLMSTED COUNTY SAIC

Joann Holt Angerman

The main focus of the Olmsted County SAIC continues to be guideline writing. After taking the month of August off, agencies have submitted their second drafts for review and we are currently working revisions to complete the final draft. As the team is completing one step, we are also looking forward to the next steps in the 8-Step process: Re-newing interagency agreements, Training Personnel, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Compliance. In this effort, team members have all signed up for subcommittees to work on each of these areas. The subcommittees have recently started meeting and will be carrying out to bulk of the team's work for the time-being. In particular, the Monitoring and Evaluation committee will be working with SVJI on a half-day training to discuss the importance of these steps and to assist our team in defining our goals.

Systems Consultation remains a vital part of the Olmsted SAIC and has recently been the source of rich discussion regarding marital rape and that the statutes do not cover situations in which a victim is physically incapacitated and/or unconscious. The Olmsted SAIC discussed the possibility of SVJI approaching legislators about amending the statutes.



RAMSEY COUNTY SAPT

Nicole Albaugh, Site Coordinator

The Ramsey County Sexual Assault Protocol Team is currently beginning its third cycle in the protocol process. The team has been collecting resources for the Inventory of Existing Services and plans to have a final draft completed at the December meeting. From there the team will narrow down the resources to include those that would be

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Site Updates, Cont.

most likely to be able to refer victims to resources they may need. Those agencies that are selected will be the ones listed in the protocol handbook.

In October the team co-sponsored the first ever county-wide training on "Taking the Initial Sexual Assault Report" for law enforcement first responders. Over 42 people attended. An evaluation of the training will be sent out to all participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. The University of St. Thomas offered to video tape the training so the team could put together a series of 15 minutes roll call DVD trainings for law enforcement agencies in Ramsey County.

Finally, the team is beginning to collect data for its annual monitoring and evaluation of the protocol. Team members were sent an email survey to complete. A follow up phone call will be made by an intern to gather responses from those that did not respond to the email. Interns will also be contacting team members to get names of at least two staff members that could be called to complete a brief survey on the protocol. This data will help us determine how the protocol is being utilized and implemented within Ramsey County. Our goal is to have results compiled by the beginning of March 07.



SOUTHERN ST. LOUIS COUNTY SMART

Brook Holmberg, Site Coordinator

As we enter the certain depths of a long northern Minnesota winter, so goes the Southern St. Louis County SMART down the detailed path of Evaluation and Monitoring! Although there has been a brief period of delay, due mostly to the team facilitators two month maternity leave, the collaboration is due to pick up in December where it left off!

In late August the team attended a half-day kick-off training facilitated by Donna Dunn and Michelle Hall of MNCASA and SVJI and Jeanne Martin and Jim Pittenger of Olmsted County. The day was a brainstorm of innovative ideas on how to effectively research the effects of the work that the Duluth SMART has already done. Specifically, the training addressed how to

evaluate the sexual assault protocols written and implemented in Duluth 5 years ago. The protocols were originally written with the intentions to create a countywide system that successfully responds to the needs of all victims of sexual assault in a timely and compassionate manner. The evaluation and monitoring process will address whether or not the protocols are doing just that! After the assessments are done, the team will then move to make the protocol changes as necessitated by the evaluation results.

As our team evolves into an even more all-encompassing, multidisciplinary group, this December we are welcoming to the table a female Captain from the Duluth Army National Guard. Although her membership is not yet official, we are hopeful her participation and knowledge will lend great perspective on the unique needs of victims of sexual assault in the military, on a permanent basis!

Finally, a subcommittee has begun to plan a spring advocacy training for all Domestic Violence agencies in the Southern St. Louis County area. The training will include protocol updates, countywide systems policies and procedures, as well as a discussion on the specific needs and issues faced by victims of sexual assault.

In the end, after the statistics are gathered and our mission statement is lived out, all we really want is for all persons to live this life free from the fear of violence. I believe I am safe to say that together we will face the violence from all sides until it has no strength to fight back!!



Rice County SMART

Melanie Matson, Site Coordinator

The Rice County SMART has begun to develop the team protocol. The team discussed the prosecution protocol in June, advocacy protocol during July, probation protocol during August, medical protocol during September, and law enforcement protocol in October. The SMART will continue to discuss discipline protocol drafts, followed by a review of the entire protocol. This review will focus on victim-centeredness, consistency and flow of the entire response system,

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Site Updates, Cont.

since the goal of this process is a victim-centered, multidisciplinary response to sexual assault. The dedication and commitment of agencies and representatives is greatly appreciated.

Carver County SAIC

Tara Keehr, Site Coordinator

The Carver group has decided, after much discussion over a long period of time, to include victims beginning at the age of 14, because many of our victims are young people. That means we'll be re-vamping some of our materials for the 2nd Community Needs Assessment and will delay its publication. However, we decided that it was better to be more

inclusive and to do a really comprehensive job, rather than a rush deal.

Walter and Carmen Patino, owners of Golden Tongue Consultants, will be presenting on cross cultural issues to the Carver group on Tuesday, December 19th. They are expert interpreters and translators who have worked extensively with sexual assault victims, law enforcement and social services and have presented on cross cultural issues many times across Minnesota. We are really looking forward to their insights on how better to deal with the special issues that are present when dealing with Hispanic/Latino victims.

Announcing 2 New Protocol Teams!

Two new multidisciplinary teams are joining this valuable systems collaboration work in Minnesota. In January, the Office of Justice Programs of the MN Department of Public Safety announced that funding was awarded to Goodhue/Wabasha Sexual Assault Services (Redwing) and the Sexual Assault Program of Beltrami, Cass and Hubbard Counties (Bemidji) to start (Sexual Assault Multidisciplinary Action Response Teams) SMART teams. Both programs have been studying the SMART process, gathering local support for the work, and discussing the changes that have come with collaborative work with site coordinators from the other eight SMART teams. Both have also enjoyed strong collaborative relationships with their local systems engaged in responding to incidents of sexual assault.

Both teams have scheduled the initial three-day training with SVJI trainers. All team members are expected to participate in the training which will introduce them to this process of collaborating and will help them begin the work of the community needs assessment. Cassandra Johnson Blackbird, Director of the Bemidji program and Kris Kvols, Director of the program in Redwing have both expressed excitement at the future of this work in their respective areas. Said Kvols, "We have a great team put together and we know that Goodhue County will benefit tremendously from this collaborative spirit." Johnson Blackbird agreed, "Our B-SMART team (for Beltrami County) has worked together informally for several months now. We see this as the prime opportunity to make some new headway together."

OJP and the SVJI acknowledge that there was stiff competition for these two new grants. Teams which applied and were not awarded funds will have the opportunity to apply when funds become available in the future.

The funding is designed as two year funding that is renewed for two years given continued project success. The goal of the SMART teams is to develop and implement interagency protocols that ensure a victim-centered response to sexual assault based on local resources and needs. This process has been identified nationally as a "best practice" model and has been successfully implemented in 10 Minnesota Counties.

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SAVE THE DATE

1st Annual MNCASA AWARE!

Wednesday, April 25th
4—8 p.m.
Kelly Inn—Suite 1001
St. Paul, MN 55103

Wine, cheese and raffle!

Come and support the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault!

Check our website for updates.

www.mncasa.org