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CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT OPERATION SAFE HOME

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

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"...women and children suffer routinely at the hands of abusive husbands, boyfriends, fathers and partners. This is an outrage and a pattern of violence that must be stopped."

**Lieutenant Governor A. Paul Cellucci
Chair, Governor's Commission on
Domestic Violence - 2/94**

Despite increased public awareness on the plight of battered women and children by both public and private sectors, the number of domestic violence homicides in Massachusetts has continued to escalate. In 1993 a woman was killed as a result of domestic violence every eight days, compared to every twenty-two days in 1990. Thirty people were killed at the hands of a 'loved' one in Massachusetts during calendar year 1994 (Massachusetts Coalition of Battered Women's Service Groups, 1995). For the victims of domestic abuse, the realities are that the criminal justice system has not provided the necessary assistance. The police role in the intervention and referral process has been inconsistent. Relying on traditional procedures to deal with this problem has proven to be dangerously ineffective. The relationships between community based agencies that deal with the battered and their abusers and police departments have been based on ad hoc cooperation. Many lives have fallen through the cracks.

In Cambridge, domestic violence complaints have also increased. Between 1987 and 1993 domestic assaults increased 135 percent. They continue to represent a high proportion of the total assault picture. In response to the dramatic increase of violence against intimates, the Cambridge Police Department started an integrated response system to domestic violence. It incorporates all sectors of the city in an expanded model of community policing. With this venue, the police department created a citywide Domestic Violence Task Force to involve every agency and organization in a concerted bid to evaluate the dimensions of domestic violence and create an effective and efficient response to the domestic violence crisis.

The Cambridge Police Department, along with representatives of the Transition House (a battered women's shelter), the Emerge Program (a program for battering men), and the Cambridge Women's Commission met to develop a comprehensive citywide effort. With this collaborative effort, two issues became apparent. No collective data existed for an analysis of the problem of domestic violence. In addition, community based organizations and the police department had no formal mechanism to join efforts and resources for response and prevention. Thus spawned the need for this project, a principle element of which was improving the training of law enforcement officers in responding to domestic violence.

Training programs per se cannot be assumed to be beneficial. If they involve sexual discrimination or harassment, they can be quite damaging (POGB, 1990). If they do not adequately address appropriate issues, they may be regarded as irrelevant (Crowley et al., 1990; Eigenberg and Moriarty, 1991; Stalnaker and Bell, 1990). If training materials are improperly designed, they may

even encourage violence (CCD, 1991a). Consequently, evaluation of a domestic violence training project must examine the process of the training as well as its results. This report examines both for the Cambridge domestic violence project.

OPERATION SAFE HOME

With funds from the federal Edward Byrne program, the Cambridge Police Department hired an experienced domestic violence liaison and purchased a personal computer dedicated solely to the maintenance of information on domestic violence and sexual assault cases. Project staff designed the database to include information which allows case review, identification of repeat offenders, and cross-referencing of sexual assault and stalking law violations. It also produces a statistical overview of domestic violence and sexual assault in the community.

The principle goals of the project are to:

- ◇ Integrate domestic violence case handling with community policing
- ◇ Use a departmental liaison to monitor follow-up action on incidents
- ◇ Create a database to track domestic violence perpetrators and incidents
- ◇ Provide training to officers to improve their handling of domestic violence cases and provision of information needed to prosecute offenders

The Cambridge Police Department pioneered the use of personal alarm systems with victims at risk for repeated violence and /or those without telephones. The department has deployed six alarm units and will evaluate the effectiveness of this new response to victims in danger. The department has also worked with advocates to develop a questionnaire to evaluate the impact of the alarm system and involve advocates in the administration of the evaluation tool. Through these efforts the department has received national recognition for its interest in personal alarm devices used in the maintenance of a domestic violence victim's household safety.

At present each police officer in the department has or is going to receive four hours of in-service training on domestic violence. The department has employed the Transition House and Emerge to assist in the training of all officers on domestic abuse issues as part of the continuing Police Academy. The advocates and counselors have also assisted the department in establishing a sensitive and effective protocol for first response to a domestic violence situation. The department seeks to provide the Domestic Violence Investigation Unit with specialized professional training in investigation

techniques and effective responses to the victim and abuser. The Unit is providing leadership on the issue with the department as well as within the city at large. Training has been part of a thirteen week in-house police department training which began in April of 1993.

The department has worked with advocates and police agencies to identify, refine and implement a special profiling tool, a "Risk Factor Offender Profile" (Appendix 1). Offenders that can be profiled, as to his or her potential for violence, help the police officer in better selecting the best manner in which to respond to a case. (i.e. arrest complaint, hearing, restraining order and referral for other services). The profile can also generate valuable data such as habits, environmental factors and personal characteristics of offenders. Utilizing existing profiles, the department eventually plans to measure the effectiveness of the police response and the case outcome based on the profile.

The department has also created a citywide Public Awareness Campaign in Cambridge to involve all sectors of the community. Working with community based advocates and the city's Commission on the Status of Women, the department has engaged in a publicity campaign about the realities of domestic violence and the development of the citywide integrated response system. The Cambridge Police department wants increased public awareness of the problem, deterrence of the violence, and the earliest possible intervention by advocates and police when necessary to avert or deal with domestic abuse. The department also wants to encourage women who have become frightened away from seeking domestic abuse restraining orders to know that the city has developed a more comprehensive response to their situations.

EVALUATION PLAN

"Operation Safe Home" has looked to achieve a series of outcomes which would better enable the department and its community allies to resolve domestic violence cases and deter many others. Evaluation of the project is based on a highly detailed analysis of the patterns of response to domestic violence in Cambridge.

Using the customized database provides the capacity for:

- a. Cross-referencing of incidents with regard to repeat offenders and restraining orders violations.
- b. The database also provides for the relationship between existing restraining orders and number and nature of service calls, with particular attention on levels of violence.
- c. Objective measurement of the impact of personal alarm devices according to final case outcomes as well as subjective accounts of victims who utilize them.
- d. Correlate data with regard to the range of police response and particular case outcome.

- e. Increased accuracy and detail in incident reports involving domestic violence or possible domestic violence submitted by patrol

Through the work of the Domestic Violence Investigation Unit, a case management and problem solving approach to policing of domestic violence will;

- a. Employ state of the art investigation techniques in efficient and sensitive intervention and response to cases which can be evaluated and replicated.
- b. Provide leadership and training within the department to increase the quality of first response to domestic violence among patrol officers.
- c. Contribute guidance to the larger community as of a citywide publicity campaign to reduce domestic violence in Cambridge.
- d. Utilize the Offender Profile as to meet the demands of particularly high risk cases.

The department wants to bridge advocacy, resources and treatment agencies with policing by incorporating the Domestic Violence Liaison and the services provided by members of the citywide Domestic Violence Task Force. Also, within this union the department will evaluate the outcome of cases where community resources are caused to endure.

Conducting a semi-annual evaluation process with the members of the Cambridge Domestic Violence Task Force will determine if the collaborative efforts serve the goals of educating all sectors of the city for awareness and deterrence, effective law enforcement, useful data development and analysis, and productive interaction among public and private organizations. This process provided information in this report.

The Cambridge Police Department, with the assistance of the Statistical Analysis Center and the National Institute of Justice, developed an evaluation assessment tool which will analyze the implementation of these new strategies and practices, once it is implemented. At the time of the report, information was not yet available from this instrument. Assessment of the training impact is a particular focus of this instrument development. A process evaluation was used to describe how the project has been implemented. An impact evaluation was also used to document in detail the effects of the program.

Additional strategies were planned, but not implemented, do to the obstacles of fielding the instruments. Traditional measurements, such as the Uniform Crime Reports, and Calls for Service figures would help to determine if domestic violence reporting is on the rise or decline. Follow-up surveys with victims could also measure the perception of fear as it relates to domestic violence. Ongoing survey instruments could help to express and outline the departments future direction in its' efforts to quell the problem of domestic abuse. These strategies will have to await future efforts.

RESULTS TO DATE

The project began many of the tasks called for in its action plan. The department formed an advisory panel. It wrote a job description and hired a domestic violence liaison. The liaison works with detectives who investigate domestic violence calls. She collaborates with the Cambridge Women's Commission and the Domestic Violence Court Advocate in the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. The liaison also works with Transition House and Emerge, programs in Cambridge providing services and treatment for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. In addition, she provides referrals to community service organizations, based on victim needs.

The project purchased required computers. The advisory committee and the domestic violence liaison conducted inquiries to find the best database system to manage with sufficient scope and flexibility the data required to track domestic violence cases in the city of Cambridge. A consultant had also been hired to make the database fully compatible with the goals of the project. The domestic violence liaison met with the police departments in Quincy and Framingham to evaluate the effectiveness of the data collection systems and their interfaces with new intervention strategies and advocacy for victims of domestic abuse.

Northeastern University's Criminal Justice Program and the Center for Applied Social Research agreed to work with the Domestic Violence Unit to expand and improve the current offender profile that is in use. This has allowed tracking domestic violence calls for service and court protection order requests (209A's).

Assignments and activity by the Domestic Violence Unit increased from 1993 to 1995 (See Table 1). A dramatic increase in the number of investigations is reported. This is mainly due to better documentation of domestic violence cases. The improved documentation is associated with an increase in arrests, which may have been an indirect consequence. These improvements are a notable success of the Operation Safe Home project.

Table 1
Domestic Violence Unit Activity
1993-1995

ACTIVITY	1993	1994	1995 est.
Total Incidents Investigated	376	641*	783*
Arrests Made	296	355	390
Emergency Restraining Orders Issued	91	152	183
Restraining Orders Issued	576	628	398
Restraining Orders Served	370	398	429
Community Events	N/A	23	24
Calls for Service	2,057	1,924	1,809

* The increase in incidents investigated mainly results from better documentation of investigations.

The department continues to use a basic domestic violence offender profile for determination of deployment of alarm systems and identification of victims of high risk repeated assaults.

Transition House and Emerge staff developed a four-hour curriculum for training within the Police Academy and began that training in April 1993. Officers and the Domestic Violence Liaison attended the accredited training program for persons working with domestic violence offenders in April. They have also trained five new members of the recruit class who had already completed the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Training Council program. Members of the Domestic Violence Unit have attended specialized training programs, including "Violence Against Women: Attitude and Intervention" and "Criminal Justice Responses to Domestic Violence."

Systematic data on training is not yet available. Qualitative reports indicate that the quality and completeness of data provided by officers is improving. Further information on the training will be collected in conjunction with an NIJ technical assistance team.

As stated earlier, the department has purchased and deployed six alarm systems for use by victims. The project placed them in homes where the offender profile indicates a risk of a repeat

offense, where the victim has no telephone, or is vulnerable to an attack near the home. An evaluation tool/questionnaire has been developed to study the alarms' effectiveness. The questionnaire will be distributed this summer to allow enough time to show the use of the systems.

The department also developed a "Family Violence Resource Card" for police officers, Cambridge Hospital providers and all neighborhood health centers for distribution to every client whose complaint or query indicates that domestic violence may be a factor in their lives or that of family members. The public education activities have had high visibility. It was featured in an article in Parade magazine.

EVALUATION OBSTACLES

Several difficulties arose when evaluating the training program. Identifying the appropriate measures to use and dealing with changes in the evolving project were the principle problems. These difficulties delayed evaluation activity because programmatic changes affected choice of appropriate measures and the procedures for data collection. Some evaluation objectives were not achieved because of these obstacles. One problem is particularly noteworthy.

Changes in Relationships

During the project, the relationship changed between the program coordinator and officers involved in responding to and investigating domestic violence cases. The program coordinator is an MSW social worker. The investigators and responders were police officers. The goals and needs of those with different training and job requirements developed in different directions. The social work trained coordinator became interested and involved in the evaluation. She was able to easily identify benefits to her job resulting from the study, especially for tracking trends in domestic violence in Cambridge. Officers became more oriented to improving their investigations. They sought and needed more individual, rather than summary, information. These conflicting needs created increasing difficulties in implementing aspects of the evaluation that required cooperation between them. For example, doing an officer survey of the effects of the training on their behavior was not implemented because of disagreements over what information the survey should generate to meet the needs of the project coordinator and the officers.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Several strategies were used to try and reduce these obstacles. Involving personnel from the Cambridge Police Department in identifying information needed was partially successful. However, conflicting information needs produced less than satisfactory results.

The different goals and needs of the coordinator and the officers created needs for different information. The coordinator needed information at the programmatic level. The officers needed information about particular cases to improve their investigations. Greater involvement of the evaluation

staff in identifying common information needs might have improved this problem. Evaluators of training programs need to recognize that some training projects will require considerable front-end efforts to help the stakeholders reach an accommodation regarding information to be produced by the evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS

The Cambridge Police Department began or implemented most of the tasks proposed by the project plan. Training, a public awareness campaign, and development of a database system are ongoing. Introduction of the database has revealed additional information needs of the department regarding domestic violence cases. This led to a switch in the database program to one having broader report capacity. Technical assistance provided by the Boston Police Department research unit and by Northeastern University's Center for Applied Social Research dealt well with the expansions and revisions to the system.

The project had a number of outcomes that the training was expected to affect, either directly or indirectly. Assessment of the training impacts collected information on completeness of officers reports, use of court protection orders, prosecution of offenders, and use of services by the victims. The National Institute of Justice Technical Assistance Team collaborated on the choice of measures used and specification of analysis.

The training showed significant successes in increasing the identification of domestic violence incidents and improving collection of evidence needed for prosecution of these cases. Continuing improvements in putting evidence into reports and in case referral will further strengthen the success of this and similar projects.

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APPENDIX

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENDER PROFILE

CAMBRIDGE POLICE DEPARTMENT
DOMESTIC ABUSE INVESTIGATIVE OFFENDER PROFILE

Offender's Name: _____
Date Interviewed: _____

Detective: _____
File Number: _____

1. Has the offender used physical violence previously? Describe injuries? _____

2. Does the offender own or have access to weapons? If yes, what kind? Is the offender licensed to carry or possess an FID card? _____
3. Does the offender use alcohol and/or drugs? If yes, which type? _____

4. Does the offender have a mental illness or ever been evaluated for a mental illness? _____

5. Does the offender have, or has in the past been, a risk for suicide? _____

6. Did the offender use any threats during this incident? If yes, what kind of threat? _____

7. Has the offender used threats in the past? If yes, what was the nature of the threat? _____

8. Is there a risk of a sexual assault by the offender now? Has there been any sexual assaults in the past? _____

9. Has the offender expressed feelings of jealousy in the past? Did the offender present as jealous during this incident? _____
10. Does the offender pose a threat of adult kidnapping? Has the offender tried in the past to commit the act of kidnapping? _____
11. Has the offender damaged property during this assault? Has the offender damaged property in past assaults? _____

12. Is the offender currently employed? Where and by whom (including part time employment)? If the offender is not employed, what is the date of last employment? _____

WARRENT CHECK _____ BOP _____ FIREARM PERMIT _____ 209A ISSUED _____
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