

## Appendix 2: Creating an Intervention Project

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This paper has been adapted from "Eight Key Components of Community Intervention Projects," in *Coordinating Community Responses to Domestic Violence: Lessons from Duluth and Beyond*, Melanie F. Shepard and Ellen L. Pence, eds., Sage Publications, 1999; used with permission.

Intervention projects are shaped by factors unique to a community, such as population, geographic area covered, available resources (especially financial), and the cooperativeness of practitioners within the justice system. The experiences of dozens of projects across the country have identified the following eight activities as effective intervention in response to domestic violence.

The ways these activities are carried out in a community varies. If resources are limited, as they generally are, these activities may have to be prioritized. Different activities will also take priority at different points in a project's existence. Building a common perspective shared by justice system practitioners, advocates, and the military will be ongoing and is likely to take more time and energy during the implementation stage.

- 1. The intervention project changes how the community thinks about violence by building an underlying philosophical framework which guides the intervention process.** This involves:
  - a. Working toward an understanding among practitioners of the complex dynamics of an abusive relationship and a commitment to handle cases in a manner that does not blame or re-victimize the victim
  - b. Recognizing that violence is intended to have an impact on the person being hit, kicked, or shot at, giving one party power over the other and reinforcing coercive control
  - c. Responding to tensions often caused by conflicting philosophies by coordinating ongoing discussions among practitioners
  
- 2. The intervention project assists in developing and implementing the policies and operating procedures of the intervening agencies involved in the coordinated community response.** This involves:
  - a. Charting or mapping the roles, possible intervention actions, and procedures of each intervening agent in the system, e.g., 911 dispatcher, police officer, jailer, prosecutor, probation agent
  - b. Ensuring that each agency's policies complement other agency policies

- c. Clarifying for practitioners when they may exercise discretion, when they must take certain steps and what conditions suggest different options
  - d. Meeting with practitioners from each agency to examine how current practices affect victims and explore new practices which can maximize victim safety
  - e. Designing ongoing trainings for practitioners on the implementation of policies and procedures
- 3. The intervention project monitors/tracks cases from initial contact through case closure to ensure practitioner and offender accountability.** This involves:
- a. Determining what information is important and where and how to get it
  - b. Developing policies with each agency for the collection of data and a process to notify administrators when practitioners fail to comply with agreed-upon policies
  - c. Tracking cases for breakdowns in the system
  - d. Utilizing data to determine if agency objectives are being realized
  - e. Maintaining case files to ensure the offender is complying with all orders from the court
- 4. The intervention project coordinates the exchange of information and interagency communication on a need-to-know basis and coordinates interagency decision-making on domestic violence cases.** This involves:
- a. Routing all available information on a case to those practitioners involved with it
  - b. Coordinating interagency meetings to resolve problems with individual cases and discuss related issues faced by practitioners
  - c. Facilitating input by all people and agencies who are affected by the development or change of a policy
  - d. Providing for the exchange of information between agencies so there is a common understanding of how their policies complement one another's efforts
  - e. Coordinating interagency meetings to assess the coordinated response
- 5. The intervention project ensures that resources and services which offer safety and protection from further abuse are available to victims and other at-risk family members.** This involves:
- a. Providing information and referrals to victims about battered women's advocacy programs and shelters
  - b. Ensuring that victims have access to basic resources, including emergency safe housing, legal advocacy, access to financial support, and emotional support
- 6. The intervention project utilizes a combination of sanctions, restrictions, and rehabilitation services to hold offenders accountable and to protect victims**

**from further abuse.** This involves working with:

- a. Law enforcement to adopt an arrest policy
- b. Prosecutors and judges to develop policies and guidelines which discourage the “screening out” of cases
- c. Probation and the courts to ensure that presentence investigations are conducted and, when appropriate, extended probation periods ordered
- d. Judges to ensure that repeated acts of violence or violations of orders for protection result in stricter penalties, including jail, counseling, no-contact provisions, restitution, community service, and other restrictions
- e. Counseling programs to hold offenders accountable by monitoring the offender’s attendance at groups

**7. The intervention project works to undo harm to children.** This involves:

- a. Assessing for risk to children at each point of intervention
- b. Providing safe places for children to visit with their non-custodial parent
- c. Requiring abusive parents to participate in groups which focus on helping children heal from the effects of living in a home where there has been violence
- d. Accounting fully for the pattern, severity, and frequency of violence being used by a parent when determining visitation, custody, and rehabilitation plans

**8. The intervention project evaluates the coordinated community response from the standpoint of victim safety and the overall objectives of the intervention project goals.** This involves:

- a. Collecting data on a continuing basis to determine if the agreed-upon procedures and policies are consistently applied
- b. Conducting research to determine the effectiveness of policies and procedures in protecting women from further violence and reducing the victim-blaming practices of institutions
- c. evaluating the level of change of court-mandated offenders by analyzing reductions in abusive behaviors and the extent to which women are free to act without control or restraints from the offender

The intervention project carries out these activities in conjunction with the domestic violence victim advocacy organization and in coordination with the various agencies of the justice system and the military response: law enforcement, city and county jails, city and county prosecutors, criminal and civil courts, probation, counseling programs, and shelters or victim advocacy programs. Each agency has a specific role in each case. Each agency’s role must be carefully coordinated with those of the other agencies to ensure a consistent and uniform response.

An intervention project is most effective if it is independent from city and county government. While intervention projects are usually separate from the domestic violence victim advocacy agency, organizers should work with the advocacy organization to ensure

that the intervention project does not negatively impact shelter funding and that the protection of victims through safe housing and confidential advocacy takes priority.