



Holding High Risk Offenders Accountable: High Risk Teams and Risk Assessments

Bristol County, MA

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Why the need for high-risk teams?

- Number of DV cases across the county
- Repeat serial batterers
- Serious, escalating violence and injuries
- Homicide prevention





Bristol County H.A.R.T. Program

- Established about 2014
- Multi-disciplinary approach
- To identify high-risk domestic violence offenders and define strategies to maximize the safety of their victims and increase offender accountability



Who is involved in an offender- based team?

- District Attorney's Office
- Police Departments
- U.S. Attorney's Office
- Sheriff's Office
- Probation
- Parole
- Community Advocacy Agencies
- DCF
- DTA

Offender characteristics to look for:

- Complete Criminal History Analysis
- Repeat DV offenders
- Type of Weapon
- Strangulation
- Threats
- Escalation



H.A.R.T. Offender List first 3 months

- 15 Total Offenders
- 15 Active
- 0 Interim
- 779 Adult charges, 86 juvenile charges
- 8 with open cases, 4 on probation & 3 serving sentences
- 43 Victims
- 102 Restraining Orders (ROs)



How Does the Offender Based Program Work?

- Based on a List of High Risk Serial Batterers
- Bi-monthly meetings
- Monthly review of BOPs
- Daily communication



Administration of H.A.R.T.

- DA's Office
- Police
- Probation
- Parole
- Sheriff's Office
- U.S. Attorney's Office
- Community Victim Service Agencies
- All Participants





Victim Safety

- Who are our victims?
- What do we do when they do not want to testify?

Victim Services: Steps we take

- Phone contact
- Letters to victims without phones
- Civilian Police Advocates
- Visits by police, probation and parole
- Community advocacy agencies
- Continued outreach throughout the community-
brochures/palm cards/events



What are the benefits of H.A.R.T.? (or something like it)

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Information Sharing
- Strong Relationships
- Centralized Information
- Tracking of High Risk Offenders



The expansion of H.A.R.T. in 2015

- Expanding across Bristol County
- Developing DV/SA roundtables





H.A.R.T. today

- Total Offenders
- Adult charges
- juvenile charges
- open cases, on probation & serving sentences
- Victims
- Restraining Orders (ROs)

Problems starting a program

- Getting everyone informed
- Administrative overload
- Tweaking the program for the other areas



County-wide Risk Assessment Policies and Procedures

- Grew from the work of the high risk team, Governor's Council DV/SA and a DOJ grant
 - Consistent "tool"
 - Policies and procedures



Tool-Risk Assessment Worksheet

- Suspect and victim info
- Past violence
- Threats/guns/strangulation/stalking
- Intimidation/left before
- Suspect employed, substance abuse/depressed/past ROs/violence w/ others/in BIP



Policies and Procedures

- Law Enforcement Officers
- Advocates-community agencies
- DA's Office
- Probation/Parole
- Sheriff's Department



Protocol For Law Enforcement

When Should the Risk Assessment Screen Be Conducted?

When there is a current or previous intimate relationship between the parties and the responding officer:

- A. believes a violent incident may have occurred, including reported strangulation
- B. senses the potential for **danger** is high,
- C. is responding to **repeat** names or location, or
- D. simply **believes** one should be conducted.





Officer's responsibilities once the Risk Assessment Screen has been completed

- Inform the victim of your concern
- Contact local DV advocacy agency day or night
- Follow-up procedures
- Continued Collaboration

Rome wasn't built in a day

- What works?
- Where are the gaps?





Thank you!

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