

Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force

Evaluation Summary

The Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force (KCDVTF), which was formed in 1995, is addressing one of the most serious public health issues facing the Kitsap community. The goal of the KCDVTF is to increase the safety of domestic violence victims and to hold perpetrators accountable through an effective coordinated community response.

The strategies used by the KCDVTF are aimed at building community awareness about and a coordinated community response to domestic violence. The Task Force provides an annual community-wide conference, professional and community training, community networking meetings, community-wide distribution of a resource guide for domestic violence victims, a quarterly newsletter, and a website.

Evaluation Goal - In January 2002, the Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force embarked on an evaluation process to determine whether the activities organized by the Task Force 1) increases the safety of domestic violence victims and 2) are perceived as effective by the community.

Evaluation Approach - Evaluation questions were asked of three participating groups using three different methods.

- Victims of domestic violence living in the local shelter were interviewed. (January)
- Community members, who have participated in KCDVTF activities, were surveyed by mail. (February–March)
- KCDVTF Board Members were surveyed individually at their annual planning retreat. (February)

Summary of Evaluation Results for Each Participating Group - The following describes each participating group, how evaluation questions were asked, summarized responses, comments/questions, and recommendations based on the data collected.

1. Victims of Domestic Violence

Seven women living in the local shelter for battered women serving the Kitsap County area were interviewed over the period of January 10–31, 2002. The purpose of the interview was to have a dialogue with them about their experience recognizing their need for help and receiving help related to domestic violence. The data collected from them was also reviewed for any impact that the KCDVTF may have had on their experience.

Group Description: The average age of the 7 women interviewed was 35. Three were Caucasian, one African-American, one Hispanic and two were multiple races. The average length of time living in Kitsap County was 2.8 years and the average length of stay in the shelter was 1 week. All of the women interviewed had previous experience staying in shelters. Six of them spoke of having children but only one had her children with her in the shelter. Three of them spoke of growing up in a home where there was domestic violence. While several of them indicated that substance abuse was an issue on their intake information, only one woman identified her own chemical dependency as an issue in the interview.

How evaluation questions were asked: Five basic questions were asked each woman (see attached) in the living room area of the shelter. There were 2-3 interviewers and 1-3 women being interviewed during each of the three scheduled interview sessions.

Summary of Responses:

Reasons for leaving the abusive relationship – Survival, concern for children and got information or encouragement from service providers while receiving services or seeking information for another need (i.e. divorce, substance abuse counseling).

Sources of information about domestic violence – Friends, school, classes related to children who witness domestic violence, perpetrator class, “DV brochure” in Courthouse bathroom, police gave “DV brochure”, got “DV brochure” from YWCA, and personal involvement in DV. (Note: The “DV brochure” is the Resource Guide for Domestic Violence Victims published and distributed by the Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task Force.

Quality of help received –

Strengths: The shelter, support groups, drug treatment agency, police, and Kitsap Community Resources.

Needs: Legal assistance, role models/mentors, housing and work opportunities, better coordination of services (especially housing and mental health counseling).

Impact of KCDVTF – Victims are using DV Resource Guides. Police and service providers are distributing them and victims are finding them in the bathrooms in the Kitsap County Courthouse.

Comments/Questions: The women interviewed had previous experience with living in this or other shelters located in other cities. Some of them have had a series of abusers. Most of the women interviewed were relatively new to Kitsap County and did not have family members in this area. They voiced a belief that their behavior is a pattern that they must learn to change. Lack of housing and financial support are

concerns that may cause them to go back home to the abuser. Often the victim does not leave home with children and the perpetrator has custody.

Note: One of the women interviewed, who speaks Spanish and very little English, was referred to a local social service resource for Spanish speaking families called, “El Centro de la Familia.” This is a relatively new resource in the community and shelter staff was not aware of the services provided. It is reported that she followed up on the referral and benefited a great deal from the help provided.

Would the same questions asked of individuals participating in “non-shelter” support groups yield different information? Are women participating in non-shelter support groups usually longer-term residents of Kitsap County with more family resources available? How does the KCDVTF facilitate better coordination of services for DV victims? How can housing and legal help be made more readily available? How can mentors be provided?

Recommendations:

- Repeat this interview process on an annual or biennial basis with shelter and/or non-shelter support group participants.
- Produce and distribute DV Resource Guides to additional strategic locations in the community.
- Develop a cadre of volunteers to place and replenish DV Resource Guides in new and existing locations in the community.
- Explore the development of housing, mentoring and legal assistance resources for domestic violence survivors.

2. Community Members

A survey asking questions aimed at involvement in and perception of effectiveness of DVTF was mailed to 20 community agencies/individuals identified as participating in KCDVTF activities. Those receiving surveys included representatives from criminal justice, law enforcement, social services, military, medicine, faith community, ethnic minority community, and education.

Group Description - A total of nine individuals identified as representing criminal justice, social services, education, law enforcement, and business responded to the survey. Four indicated that their agency is involved in KCDVTF activities at least monthly, one at least quarterly, two once per year, and one not at all. One did not respond to this question about agency involvement.

Summary of Responses:

Annual Summit - Six of the nine respondents had attended the annual conference organized by the DVTF. Most of them commented on the high quality of the keynote speaker and content focus (Methamphetamine) of the 2001 conference. The only change suggested was that a breakout session be included at the next conference that is aimed at professionals and describes the stages that DV victims go through in leaving their abusive situation, seeking help, and making healthy and productive adjustments.

Monthly Network Meetings - Two of the nine respondents have attended. Two of the seven that have not attended indicated that the location is not convenient or that they were not aware that there was an ongoing schedule of these meetings.

Quarterly Community Meetings - Two of the nine respondents attended. One of the seven not attending indicated that evening meetings are difficult.

Committee Meetings - Three of the nine respondents have attended committee meetings. One of those indicated that he/she discontinued attending because the meeting time is inconvenient.

Resource Guide - All nine of the respondents make use of this brochure. All thought that it was useful and well done. One suggestion was to change the color and organization to create renewed interest in the brochure – “some people will ‘stop seeing it’ otherwise.”

“What every congregation should know about DV” Brochure – Two out of the nine respondents use the brochure. Two of the seven who did not use the brochure indicated that they did not have or know about the brochure.

Quarterly Newsletter – Six of the nine respondents use the newsletter and two of the three who do not indicated that they are interested in receiving it.

Website - Five of the nine respondents use the website. All five thought that the website was very useful. One of those who did not know about the website, indicated that he/she will now make use of the website.

Community Training Events - Six of the nine respondents indicated that the periodic training provided by the KCDVTF is beneficial.

Overall Effectiveness Rating of the KCDVTF in helping the community increase victim safety and perpetrator accountability - Seven of the nine respondents answered this question. Five indicated that the DVTF was extremely effective and two indicated that it was mostly effective. It was suggested that getting speakers into the high schools should be a priority.

Comments/Questions: Those responding to the survey (with the exception of one) had participated at some level in KCDVTF sponsored activities. The activities that people were most familiar with and say are most beneficial are: the annual summit, the resource guide, the quarterly newsletter, the website, and community training events. Committee meetings, monthly network meetings, quarterly community meetings, and the “What Every Congregation Should Know About DV” brochure were less well attended or used. The perception of the overall effectiveness of the KCDVTF is considered high by seven of the nine respondents.

Recommendations:

- Continue those activities i.e., summit, newsletter, website, training events that are well attended and/or perceived as useful.
- Do some further evaluation of those activities (i.e., committee meetings, monthly network meetings, faith community brochure, and quarterly community meetings) that are not well attended and/or utilized to determine their worth and/or how to make them more valuable and effective.

3. KCDVTF Board Members

Fifteen board members completed a survey asking them to rate 35 Task Force organizational processes on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 as the highest score). Three of the fifteen respondents were new to the board. The survey was completed on February 26, 2002 at the board’s annual planning meeting.

Summary of Responses: The following ranks the responses of the board members from highest to lowest scores.

Regular meetings	4.7
Creates opportunities for every member	4.4
Opportunities to build respect for one another	4.3
Regularly discuss new ideas	4.3
Share common view of mission	4.3
Shares mission and goals with community	4.3
Seeks solutions to conflicts	4.1
Opportunities to build knowledge of each other	4.1
Involves many in discussion of new ideas	4.1
Effectively implements plans	4.1
Ground rules/agreements work together	4.1

Regularly achieves goals	4.1
Reviews Mission statement to determine:	
Relevancy	4.1
Revision to better address needs	4.1
If mission is fulfilled	4.0
Invites involvement outside of initial core	4.0
Effective process to run meetings	4.0
Identifies new members	3.9
Reduce hierarchical structures	3.9
Accountable without duplication of efforts	3.9
Reviews progress regularly	3.9
Strong relationships with key individuals/groups	3.9
Gathers input to define issues & strategies	3.8
Shared leadership and responsibilities	3.8
Celebrates achievements	3.8
Discuss difficulties and apply learning	3.8
Mission statement guides long & short-term goals	3.8
Leadership development opportunities	3.7
Gathers information about future trends	3.7
Sells to key leaders and community	3.7
Orients and integrates new members	3.6
Communication reflects diverse needs	3.6
Recruitment & orientation for new leaders	3.5
Clear membership criteria	3.5
Broad and diverse financial support	3.5
Revise organizational structure if appropriate	3.5
Widely publicizes accomplishments	3.4

Comments/Questions: The strongest organizational feature of the KCDVTF according to the board members is that it has regular meetings. Overall, the processes of the DVTF are perceived by this group as inclusive, respectful, effective, and true to the group’s mission. The weaker aspects of the DVTF organizational processes are collectively perceived to be 1) leadership recruitment, orientation and development, 2) new membership orientation, integration and clear membership criteria, 3) broad and diverse financial support, 4) flexibility related to making appropriate revisions in structure, 5) communicating about and addressing diverse needs, 6) publicizing and “selling” the accomplishments of the group to key leaders and the community, and 7) gathering data related to future trends and defining issues and strategies.

Recommendations:

- Discuss and prioritize several organizational issues to be addressed over the next 1-3 years.
- Make sure that the many strengths of the organization are celebrated and maintained as the DVTF addresses identified areas of need.

Some thoughts about potential activities are:

- a. Evaluate whether the current structure of the DFTV is as effective as it could be.
- b. Develop a marketing plan for the DVTF that is aimed at 1) publicizing accomplishments, 2) recruiting new members and leaders, and 3) broadening funding support.
- c. Develop a plan to provide new members and leaders with orientation, training, and other development opportunities.
- d. Continue to seek data in order to inform the definition of issues and the development of strategies and the measurement of outcomes.
- e. Continue to address the diverse needs of the community.

Summary of Evaluation Results: The Kitsap County Domestic Violence Task force is addressing one of the most serious public health issues in our community. The mission of the KCDVTF is to increase the safety of domestic violence victims and to hold perpetrators accountable through a coordinated community response. The evaluation of the efforts of the KCDVTF was focused on determining whether the activities of the KCDVTF are 1) contributing to the safety of DV victims, and 2) perceived as effective. Three groups - survivors, community participants and board members - were asked a series of questions aimed at gauging effectiveness and perceived effectiveness. Seven women currently housed in the local shelter for battered women were asked in a face-to-face interview about their experiences with getting help. While none of them had heard of the KCDVTF, three of them indicated that they had seen and used the Resource Guide to Domestic Violence that is published and distributed by the KCDVTF. Nine community members, representatives of agencies that have participated in KCDVTF activities, answered a survey via mail. They were asked about their level of participation and perception of effectiveness related to the specific KCDVTF sponsored activities and to the KCDVTF as a whole. They rated the overall effectiveness of the KCDVTF as high. The most utilized and beneficial activities were the annual summit, the Resource Guide, the quarterly newsletter and the community training events. Significantly less utilized or attended were the committee meetings, quarterly community meetings, monthly networking meetings, and the faith community resource brochure. Fifteen board members were asked at their planning retreat to individually complete a survey aimed at their perception of the organizational effectiveness of the KCDVTF. While they collectively rated the KCDVTF as inclusive and effectively run, they also identified some relative weaknesses. Some of the weaker aspects of the KCDVTF organizational process include: leadership and member recruitment and orientation, data gathering to inform issues, strategies and trends, financial support, and publicizing accomplishments. On the basis of the data gathered, it appears that the KCDVTF is providing victims and community members with information and education that is contributing to the safety of victims. Data gathered

also supports that those who have some involvement with KCDVTF activities perceive it as an effective organization.

Summary of Recommendations:

- Repeat the DV survivor interview process on an annual or biennial basis with shelter and/or non-shelter support group participants. (Gather data.)
- Produce and distribute DV Resource Guides to additional strategic locations in the community. (Continue successful activity.)
- Develop a cadre of volunteers to place and replenish DV Resource Guides in new and existing locations in the community. (Recruit new members)
- Explore the development of housing, mentoring, and legal assistance resources for domestic violence survivors. (Gather data.)
- Continue external activities (i.e., summit, newsletter, website, and training events) that are well attended and/or perceived as useful.
- Do some further evaluation of those activities (i.e., committee meetings, monthly network meetings, faith community brochure, and quarterly community meetings) that are not well attended or utilized to determine their worth and/or how to make them more valuable and effective.
- Discuss and prioritize several organizational issues identified by the KCDVTF Board to be addressed over the next 1-3 years. (See Page 6)
- Make sure that the many internal strengths of the organization are celebrated and maintained as the DVTF addresses identified areas of need.