Effectively Tracking Problems and Improving Procedures

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Tracking

Does a problem trend exist? E.g., Does a reduced plea impact recidivism?

Monitoring

Are established policies or procedures improving over time ? E.g., Are police routinely asking risk questions?

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Tracking and Monitoring Methods

- **Reading reports**

- **Court observation**

- **Creating and reviewing spreadsheets**

- **Specialized domestic violence database**

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**Tracking and Monitoring
provides data to System Advocates**

- Trends
- Identify system gaps
- Adherence to new policies and procedures
- Service to partner agencies
- Improves advocacy for battered women and children

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Tracking and Monitoring Requires:

Relationships
- Understand what you need
- Understand what partner agencies need
- Building allies through shared objectives
- Integrity, responsibility and honesty

Agreements
- Be clear what you will and won't do with reports
- Clearly state how the reports will be handled
- Draft Memorandums of Understanding

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Monitoring Requires:

Reports
- How will they be selected?
- Draft vs. final reports
- Who will make them available?
- Who will pick them up/schedule?
- Do they get distributed interagency?
- How will the reports be stored/locked?

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What to Monitor? - Basics

Police incidents:

- offender and victim, and the relationship between them
- whether there is a child in common
- date and incident address
- jurisdiction and case number
- police area, beat, etc.
- whether the incident was a dual arrest
- any reason no arrest was made
- case status
- offense level
- charge(s)
- court case number, once it goes to court
- responding officers and what type of reports they filed

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Monitor Risk

Whether:
- the victim was pregnant
- a child witnessed an assault
- the offender was using alcohol or drugs in the incident
- the offender uses alcohol or drugs in general
- a weapon was involved
- the offender is under stress
- the offender is obsessed with the victim
- the offender has access to weapons, and is likely to use them
- the offender threatened to kill the victim, and whether the victim believes this is possible the offender threatened suicide
- the violence is becoming more severe or frequent
- there is a recent or impending separation

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Monitor Policy

Whether:
- officers referred victim to a shelter, and whether they contacted the shelter about the incident
- officers asked the victim specific questions establishing the level of risk
- if it appears that both parties used violence, did officers assess for self-defense or predominant aggressor before making an arrest or issuing charges?
- if the victim alleged that she was choked, did officers assess for strangulation?
- and more …

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For example, what happens to cases in Criminal Court?

- How quickly do cases move through the system?
- What pleas are made?
- Do Probation Officers hold offenders accountable, and are offenders routinely being ordered into the batterers program?

For example, in Civil Court:

- How often are protection orders granted when requested?
- If orders are denied, why?
- Are Judges consistently issuing CLEAR no-contact orders?

For example, how are victims treated throughout the CCR process?

- Do Police Officers conduct (or at least attempt) the same level of investigation with intoxicated victims as with sober ones?
- Do pre-trial release conditions and bail settings help ensure victim safety?

Tracking and Monitoring is:

- Following up on *specific* cases
- Using a database to follow trends

What To Do With Data - Internal

- All data reports start internal

- Create a review process for all data reports that will be shared with other agencies

- Data is always designed and used to improve the response

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What To Do With Data - External

Meetings
- Multidisciplinary
- Single agency
- A tool for agency supervision (controlled access)

Other uses
- State reporting
- Grant funding/reporting
- Specialized query requests from criminal justice system

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Numbers inform discussions
at interagency meetings

For example: What is the effect of the 2005 felony domestic assault by strangulation charge in Minnesota?

- **How many cases have included this charge?**
- **How many of these have gone to court?**
- **How many convictions have there been?**

Tracking

The path to tracking is integral to your response
- Advocate's work with battered women shows us the questions we need to track
- System advocates refine questions and develop query
- Data specialist constructs a query and checks back with team to ensure the query matches the question
- Data specialist monitors every report for this item
- Data specialist produces draft report on a pre-determined date for review
- Draft report is reviewed and refined by team for external use

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Following up on specific cases

- **Contact law enforcement if there are questions about how officers handled an incident.**
- **At the same time, monitor incident reports *for* law enforcement. They want to know whether they're following their own procedures.**

In 2009, DAIP entered:

- **487 law enforcement reports**
- **1682 criminal court hearings**
- **308 protection orders (including some harassment orders involving partner relationships)**
- **141 protection order modification documents**
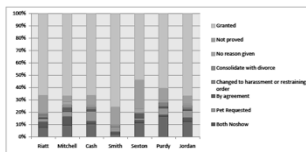
This takes about 10 hours per week

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Numbers can keep us from looking foolish

We had the feeling that Judge Smith was dismissing a disproportionate number of protection orders, but then we ran the numbers ….

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Concerns with Data

- We need to be constantly circumspect, asking   Whom would these figures affect? Could they do unintended damage?

- Figures should always be presented in a way that provides as complete a context as possible, so that they not be misused

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One CCR member asking for database information just for herself, outside of discussion with others

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People asking for police reports on their friends, because they know we have access to reports
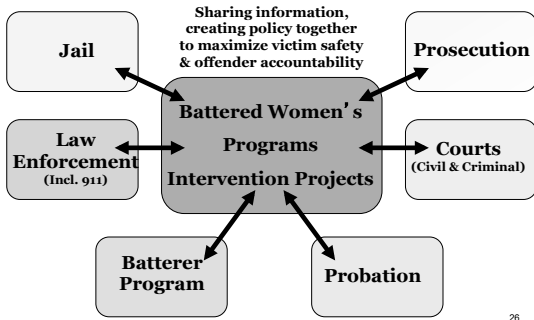
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Integrity is EVERYTHING

The constant responsibility to respect each agency's confidentiality and public image

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Duluth-Model Coordinated Community Response
(Criminal/Civil Justice System)

Sharing information, creating policy together to maximize victim safety & offender accountability

Jail

Prosecution

Battered Women's Programs Intervention Projects

Law Enforcement (Incl. 911)

Courts (Civil & Criminal)

Batterer Program

Probation

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