Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network Meeting Minutes December 13, **2016**

Present: Chris Huffine (Allies in Change), Erin Browning (Family Court Enhancement Project), Jenny Woodson (FCEP), Teresa Conlan (Allies in Change), Sarah Van Dyke (Clackamas County), Kate Sacket (Portland State University), Alison Dunfee (Pathfinders of Oregon), Diana Groener (Allies in Change), Matt Johnston (DVSD)

Minutes by Kate Sackett, edited by Chris Huffine

Topic: Conference debriefings on batterer and sex offender intervention

Chris Huffine provided a debrief of BISC-MI's 2016 International Conference, "Reflecting Forward," which was held November 2-4, 2016 at the Edward Village Conference Center in Dearborn, MI. This conference is a hub for batterer intervention programs around the country. There were ~250 attendees, with three dozen states represented. The West Coast had light attendance, and only three individual attendees were known from Oregon. The standards supervisor for Washington State, which is currently in the process of revising their standards, attended. New York City, creating standards for the first time, also had people from there in attendance

Jackson Katz spoke, covering a lot of his usual information. He challenged the term "children who witness violence/DV" because it downplays their trauma. Instead he said "violence done to boys becomes violence done by boys" to describe an arc that is not always but can be followed. He recommended James Gilligan, husband of Carol Gilligan, as a source on violence and shame (*Violence* and *Preventing Violence*).

Brian Victor, from Michigan, presented on his work for his PhD in social work researching **sexting and "non-consensual distribution of sexual material"** (a term he used rather than "revenge porn"). Sexting is becoming normative sexual behavior, with 50-70% of young adults between 16 and 24 reporting experience sexting and two thirds of adults reporting they have sent sexual messages on social media. There are three categories of sexting coercion: resource manipulation/withholding, commitment manipulation, and defection threat. The presentation did not include cases where people (especially men) send unwanted sexual pictures to others.

One quarter of college students in one study had experienced coercive sexting, with equal rates of men and women reporting that. There is a strong correlation known between sexual coercion and interpersonal violence. Preliminary research shows sexting appears to have a greater negative impact than interpersonal violence or sexual coercion (potentially the concern is that there is a permanent image that is out there in the other person's possession and/or fear that it will never go away). Youth who are most likely to perpetrate sexting coercion are 9th grade boys (young, immature) and sexually coercive perpetrators. 9th grade girls are most likely to be victimized and those who have been victims of sexual coercion. This 9th grade age may also be when boys feel pressure to prove their sexual prowess to others, coercing girls to be able to prove

rather than lie to their friends. Sexual orientation was not analyzed in what was presenting, but respondents were not assumed to be heterosexual. Anecdotally, sexting seems to become very popular in middle school, an age when youth start dating, but are immature and engage in unskilled interactions.

Common tactics of using sexual material for revenge include a threat to distribute it (blackmail), posting it and only removing it if certain conditions are met, and distributing it with the intent to punish. Anecdotally, it seems to also be used to show off to friends, not intentionally to threaten her. Much of the time there is a complete lack of concern for her in the process rather than intentionally trying to defame her. Neglect and disrespect appear to be more the driving forces rather than a willful intent to punish he or hurt her. This is not intended to minimize the negative impact.

These actions complicate healthy sexuality in a way that people have not really caught up with yet, with the average age of first viewing porn 10 to 11 years old, and begs the question where the intervention is for that. Education has not caught up and the legal system has not caught up either, with varying laws around revenge porn and sexting. Sexting when participants are under 18 creates child pornography, and people can be arrested for that even when consensually created by a couple under 18. Stopping sexting is an unrealistic goal (like abstinence for sexual education) but using child pornography laws to address it is also not helpful partly because it has been so normalized.

There are also a growing number of people who are not negatively impacted by this. It can definitely cause trauma but also the idea of having naked pictures distributed is becoming less shameful than it was a generation or more ago. The impact is the most important aspect of the action, along with how to get support to make it stop if it is traumatic. There are currently no established channels for this, but courts are starting to recognize it and do less victim-blaming. Oregon is one of the states to get a revenge porn law on the books, and the first prosecution of it in Washington took place recently.

Debbie Tucker, the Executive Director of the National Center for Sexual and Domestic Violence, is part of a national work group on **addressing DV with vets and spoke about trauma-informed considerations with vets**. Much of that information was fairly basic and straight ahead. She discussed the "Three C's" of a coordinated community response, cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate, and five different intents of domestic violence, including battering, resist to violence, situational violence, and pathological violence. One-time illegal acts with a significant underlying pattern of non-abusive behavior was left out of these categories.

Oliver Williams and Chris Huffine talked about **abusive men who are trauma survivors**. Chris presented on trauma-informed care and specialized groups with those men. Nearly everyone in the audience was familiar with the term. Oliver spoke about the trauma that urban Black men experience, as survivors of gang and community violence, and how that leads into a criminal and

gang life style. He presented video interviews of men who were involved in gangs, perpetrated intimate partner violence, and presumably changed their ways.

A **survivor spoke** on the second day of the conference about her experience with the more extreme end of abuse. Sometimes she would be used as a tray table, sit at her partner's feet to hand him his food, who was a highly controlling, upper middle class man. Despite the extreme levels of violence, it was not until she went into the court room for divorce and someone handed her the power and control wheel that she realized she was in an abusive relationship. She had six children with him, and discussed how the older three who were exposed to more domestic violence themselves are struggling much more than her younger three kids, who were less exposed.

Scott Miller, a spokesperson for the Duluth curriculum, talked about **the importance of social change** and principles to do so such as the need to include those who were subject to the abuse, create experiences that are liberating rather than dominating, engage in a process of dialogue rather than counsel and advice, and approach as a social rather than individual problem. His discussion was grounded in Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. A shortcoming of the Duluth curriculum is that it does not adequately focus on non-illegal types of abuse. He advocated though that the power of the state should be restricted to controlling the illegal activity of the abuser.

Lisa Nitsch, from House of Ruth in Baltimore, presented on “Working with a community that does not look like you,” a cultural presentation on **working with black men** as a white woman. She talked about House of Ruth, starting with the history of Baltimore and its highly racist, segregated roots as one of the most segregated cities in the US. House of Ruth runs large groups (15-20 men) and works with ~600 men/year. Half of their attendees are unemployed, most do not have a college degree, ¾ are single, 44% are under 30 years old, and 85% are fathers. These groups tend to get arrested and prosecuted often. She used a metaphor from a Marilyn Fry article on “Consider a birdcage”: you need a macroscopic view of the pattern of the ongoing acts, not individual acts, that create domestic violence. Those individual “wires” create the “birdcage,” and that is why victims often cannot leave.

Another common theme across talks was cultural humility, which was labeled so explicitly. This involves learning about and knowing our own culture, bravely asking questions, not minimizing the need for diversity in our field, and considering being an ally as an earned status that expires at midnight every day.

Lisa also talked about the importance of staff supervision, with heavy emphasis on staff receiving supervision, addressing drift, making sure there is fidelity to the concepts, and holding each other accountable in parallel process to do this hard work. They have the funds and resources at House of Ruth to do good supervision and infrastructure there. They also do a facilitator evaluator tool for their participants on explaining topics and communicating. Research

shows it is helpful for clients to get regular feedback on how the process is going, with Barry Duncan and Scott Miller looking at that in a 3-question weekly check in.

Ricardo Carillo presented on **intersectionality**, mainly speaking from personal experience. Some others presented on responding to domestic violence in the Muslim community. Someone spoke about working with Christian community, Chris Moles, who spoke a lot about beliefs systems and suggested a way of working with them is to look at contradictions between beliefs (e.g., prosocial religious beliefs) and behaviors.

Emerge staff spoke about **working with women and LGBTQ folks**. They don't put gay men in regular groups because it's "not safe," though lesbian women are put in women's groups. This could be a sign of differences between Portland and Boston or other locations. It could also be that misogynistic men would be more homophobic in rejecting the feminine, but also not more likely to have misogyny in these men necessarily. Heterosexism of police and lack of reporting to police reduce numbers of identified gay men in the system.

Emerge has only started a group for heterosexual women in the past year for women who are mandated. They are not caught up to what providers are doing here in Oregon. Five women have completed their 40-week program, including curriculum on boundary setting, role setting, and focusing more on power dynamics, entitlements, and victim's response to behavior in the women's group than in the men's.

Ed Gondolf presented and received an award, but was ill so was not able to engage much in the conference. He presented on **change, challenges, and moving forward from the backlash in the field.** Alternative research in this field has been neglected. Gondolf presented a helpful analysis on effectiveness, but not in a typical experimental design. Since the wisdom, experience, and observations of program leaders is often overlooked, Gondolf conducted interviews with 24 people who have done the work for decades and shared his findings in his latest book. Most people don't think batterer intervention works, and this negative narrative can be found in the criminal justice field and among advocates. Key themes of his interviews are that self-awareness and self-examination are encouraged by programs, the work is getting more sophisticated and complex, there are many commonalities among different programs, a critique that evidenced-based practice is too narrowly conceived, the safety of victims is a primary concern, abusive men are also negatively affected by their own behaviors and so it is important to practice respect and support for these men with balancing confrontation, it requires a lot of on-the-job learning, and it is important to acknowledge co-occurring psychological or substance abuse issues.

The recommendations he made for researchers include directly observe groups and programs, developing more nuanced and complex outcome measures, doing qualitative research on partners' experiences, doing more case studies of men in programs, and doing more study of successful programs and why they are successful. There have been a handful of studies that are fairly narrow and traditionally designed, with random assignment and a control group, which

consistently show no improved outcomes. The Washington State study concluded BIPs are not effective, but only included ~20% of all research on BIPs because those were the only ones that fit a narrow conception of "gold standard" research. Most of the men providers see in BIPs make partial changes or no changes at all, but some make substantial change which begs the question why is effectiveness asked as a yes/no to convey if it works? Partner satisfaction does seem to improve after BIPs (as shown in Gondolf's work), which is not only about reducing recidivism and not getting rearrested. The length of time to make the change in low-risk groups is at least 2- to 4-year work.

Chris Huffine presented on the **Allies in Change curriculum**, including how it has evolved, and multiple people independently came up afterwards and said it describes what they're doing in their groups. Chris's take-away from this is that this work is not about invention, it is about discovery – even coming from different directions, providers in the long run end up in the same place doing the same kind of things in groups.

A "Truth Squad" presentation also include Chris Huffine and Eric Mankowski to provide **resources to providers and advocates to challenge some of the regression to working in the field**, such as describing the differences between anger management and batterer intervention. That example was based on a handout that came out of this group and the Tri-County discussion 18 years ago.

Melissa Geltson, from Huffington Post, gave a strong data-heavy presentation on **connecting mass shootings and DV**. Living in states with higher gun ownership increases an abused woman's likelihood of being shot. Mass shootings, meaning when there are multiple victims of gunshots at the same event and at least 4 people killed not/including the perpetrator, can be identified as either random, gang-related, and/or domestic violence types of shootings. Random types get the most media and public attention, but are the least common of the types. The most common targets are people known to the perpetrator: 57% target the family or intimate partner, 2/3 of victims are women and children, 70% occur in the home, and 42% involve a current or former partner. In 2015, there were 400+ deaths and 1/3 of the deaths were related to DV. 50% of victims of all mass killings are family members. The single biggest predictor of future violent crime is a felony DV conviction. If anyone wants to find more information on the connection between DV and mass shootings, Chris is happy to share his links.

Diana Groener then provided information from a recent sex offender conference she attended. The conference, ATSA (Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers), was held in Orlando, FL in October 2016. 1500 people attended, with lots of English-speaking countries and international representation. Diana shared information primarily from two sessions at the conference.

Karen Baker from NSVRC and Dr. Kurt Bumbee presented on the topic of **collaboration between victim advocates and those working in sex offender treatment**. This is a relatively new concept in sex offender work to collaborate across groups. Collaboration also happens with

probation, but usually only between them and either of the other two groups (i.e., not across all three at once). Collaboration involves working jointly to realize success in something, achieving the desired result by effort, skill, and courage. Sexual violence (like domestic violence) is such a broad issue that multiple strategies are needed to address all the different aspects of it, and combining expertise make us stronger. Having advocates at the table makes it so that victim needs are represented at all tables. Having a united voice (e.g., in letters to the editor about recent events) could have more effective reach when multiple voices are represented. This can also lead to maximizing resources, like joint programs, joint grants, bringing in more resources, and maximizing outcomes and effectiveness (according to what probation, victim advocates, and those working with offenders see as success).

The five essential ingredients of collaboration include (1) all parties should appreciate the value of collaboration, (2) they must identify and work toward shared goals, (3) having a basic understanding of each party's roles and responsibilities, (4) they must recognize opportunities for collaboration, and (5) they must be ready and willing to take action. A survey of treatment providers for sex offenders, victims, and parole and probation found that everyone believed that collaborative approach is extremely effective, and at the same time everyone said they are essentially not collaborating at all. Barriers to collaboration include not understanding others' roles and responsibilities, having limited opportunities to interact, demanding workloads, limited exposure to promising models of collaboration, lack of written policies in agencies and departments with goal of collaboration, professional mistrust, and burnout. “Offender management” was a group named that included offender treatment and parole/probation, with more collaboration across those groups and less with victim advocates. There is a divide here between those working more with offenders and those with victims. Potential shared goals could be helping facilitate community safety and prevent violence, addressing victims' rights and needs more comprehensively, reducing risk of re-offending by offenders, making more well-informed public policy, and maximizing resources.

Sarah McMahon also presented on **preventing sexual violence by addressing rape culture.** She referenced a 2011 study on the continuum of behaviors around sexual violence, with the low end being rape jokes and degrading language and the high end being rape, sexual assault, and obviously criminal stuff. Many community members see intervention and punishment as needed at the high end, but with no understanding that there is a connection in the continuum (e.g., between jokes, music videos and sexual assaults). One place to work as a collaborative team is to help people connect the ends of the continuum there.

The conference was the week before the election, and Trump was used as an example of rape culture. McMahon addressed myths including rape being committed more often by strangers, while in reality 92% of females and 74% of males knew their assailant. False claims of sexual assault are the same rate as any other false crime claim (2-8% of criminal reports are false). Men experience 1/10 rapes and half of all transgender people experience sexual assault. The legal definition of rape changed just a few years ago to be gender neutral (since 1927 it has been limited to only penis in vagina against a woman's will). Examples of fighting rape culture

included Jackson Katz's work and the “act like a man” box, Tony Porter's work, and Erin's law. This law passed in 26 states as an unfunded mandate that requires age-appropriate education from Kindergarten through 3rd grade on how to recognize signs, create safe reporting structures, and train parents on how to recognize when their child is being abused. One group in Hawaii created a public service announcement about college sexual assault on campus based on a real event which was also used as an example.