

## TRI-COUNTY BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROVIDERS MEETING: 11/18/08

PRESENT: Paula Manley, Manley Interventions; Johnnie Burt, Arms; Lorena Connelly, Los Niños Cuentan; Christine Crowe, Choices; Laura Davis Ritchie, Multnomah County DCJ; Pat Schreiner, Multnomah County DCJ; Shannon Konradson, ARMS; Joan Scott, Allies in Change; Phil Broyles, Teras Interventions; Brad Peterson, ANLCC; Lynda Bridges, Bridges to Safety; Ryan Alonzo, Bridges to Safety; Nana Lapham, Bridges to Safety.

Minutes by Christine Crowe and Paula Manley

### TRI-COUNTY MONTY MEETING TOPIC: HOW TO BEST WORK WITH CLIENTS IN THIS ECONOMIC DOWNTURN.

Some of this topic was touched on in the previous discussion - there was much common ground. Topic was brought up that as the economy tightens, that our clients may become more controlling, and how can we deal with that. The group wanted to address first how to keep clients in classes in the first place, considering that many of them have less income to attend classes, and that agencies are challenged to continue services.

The discussion reiterated importance of holding clients accountable - they need to pay something, whether through money or service. But all agreed we are in a new era of challenge to keep clients coming, and to stay in business.

One individual discussed the new barriers for Latino clients getting work due to the inability to get driver's licenses under the new laws. Interestingly, most agreed that the Hispanic clients tended to be more consistent in payment and had a higher employment rate than other groups - perhaps because clients seem willing to take any jobs offered. Also, Latino clients have utilized community service options when available.

Another individual indicated a belief that anyone could work if they so desired, even if it means changing their normal field of employment. Others countered that employment for many is currently very difficult given the high unemployment rates and the downsizing of so many companies. It was noted that the number of advertised jobs in the the newspaper has decreased drastically.

There was some debate as to whether clients should be required to take any job available, or be allowed to wait for a position with a higher wage. One provider indicated it was important to give them enough space so they could wait and get a job with a higher wage than if they took

the first job offered. Another viewpoint is that in considering risk, it has been documented that an individual who is employed is less likely to commit new crimes than one who is unemployed.

The concept of community service was explored at length, and it is seen as a strong component of accountability for those who do not have money. Three or four providers are currently allowing some sort of volunteer or community service options. This does not address the need for agencies to survive over the long term. It is true that many of the clients do not utilize this option and end up paying rather than doing volunteer work.

Some providers believe that providing money management skills would be helpful. The discussion concerned how the impact of financial stress might increase the likelihood of abuses. All agreed that this is a good group discussion issue and not allowing excuse-making for the stress of financial difficulties are paramount. One provider made a parallel between DV intervention and basic DBT work insofar as managing feelings of stress no matter how difficult. There was discussion as to how to address helping clients deal with maintaining violence-free attitudes in the midst of deeper economic stressors.

The group also discussed that perhaps some of the supplemental issues can be covered outside of group time. There is concern that if we focus too much on trying to include too many supplemental issues, we may dilute our programs. We need to continue what we are doing, but with a twist. We can stress core program values, emphasizing the importance of working together as a team in their relationships, how this can help perpetrators in all areas of their life, including economic stress.

(A fire drill interrupted the meeting, and while some of the discussion was continued in the parking lot, we didn't retain all attendees.)