

## **Tri-County Batterer Intervention Providers Network Meeting**

April 14, 2020

### **Attendance:**

Chris Huffine (Allies in Change), Linda Castaneda (Castaneda Counseling), Regina Holmes (ARMS), Andrew Altman (MCPC), Andrew Goodwin (Portland VA), Marci Nelson (WCCC), Stephanie Titus (Home Safe), Joy Lewis (WCCC), Shannon Barkley (CPP), Jessica Harvey (, Michelle Davis (Portland VA), Dawn Pen (CCP), Cheryl O'Neill (DHS, child welfare), Kora Krensin (Cedar Counseling Center)

### **Minutes Taken By:**

Ivy O'Rourke and Tess Van Doren, Edited By Chris Huffine

### **Discussion Topic: Navigating Batterer intervention and DV during COVID-19**

Last month we discussed COVID-19, however, a lot has changed in the time since. Chris asked the group to provide updates on how they are responding :

#### **POs - Multnomah County:**

All Buildings are closed to clients coming in. Each building has a P.O, and a few office staff. All other staff are telecommuting. POs are communicating via phone, email or video conference with clients. They have POs and advocates reaching out to survivors as well, with as limited contact as possible. Fieldwork is for emergency situations only. There are current situations that are not yet criminal but have the potential to become so, and Portland, MCSO and Gresham have said they do not have the ability to proactively intervene on cases of parole violations without criminal violations. They have had to do parole violation interventions themselves. One of the main concerns of POs is being able to verify information and maintain victim's safety. Electronic monitoring and GPS is no longer being used in new cases to minimize contact. They are working on an adapted protocol for Electronic Monitoring and GPS, to reinstate these important facets of probation.

Court and violations are still operating. Multnomah County is only allowing warrants for person to person or dangerousness to the community violations. However, they have permission to issue warrants for most violations. Generally, they are trying to operate as normal by utilizing the technology available.

About a month and a half ago, a position was cut and the money was shifted to victim services.

Additionally, it is noted that government agencies are still stable, unlike the private industry and services that they benefit from. ---> to this it was suggested to potentially use extra money to expand subsidy for probationers. Andrew Altman indicated that if there are any men from the Multnomah County DV unit who are struggling to keep current on fees due to COVID-19 issues (e.g., being laid off), they would likely qualify for the subsidy, if they're not already on it. Let them know this and have them contact their PO about this possibility.

#### **Victim Services - Clackamas County:**

Shifted to telecommuting, fairly successfully. Utilizing email and phones, has maintained contact with their other services. There has been additional outreach to high risk clients. No contact order modifications are still being done from home.

#### **P.Os - Clackamas County**

Most people are in office one day a week, there are ~5 P.Os in the office at one time. Work phones are brought home. P.Os have maintained contact with victim services, treatment providers, and clients. Contact violations are still being addressed.

**Probation - Washington County :**

Only detaining on A/B felonies, new DV arrests and anything deemed a public safety threat. The jail will not book anyone beyond those situations. Everyone is equipped with a laptop and is able to work from home. Most staff comes in one day a week. The modified court schedule is difficult to adapt to and extra work is after this period is anticipated. It's possible there could be a little bit of money freed up to help men pay for services if they are struggling.

**Victim Services - Washington County :**

Victim services folks are still available. Amy Smith is covering all direct victim client contact. Ken Rolf (supervisor of victim services) is also available.

**DHS:**

Guidance has been provided based on the 4 levels of intervention in Europe (i.e., individual calls, crisis management, behavioral management, outreach to abused partners). Workers are still responding but there are fewer calls.

**VA:**

Everything has been transitioned to telework. They have seen an uptick in IPV reports from veterans. It has been challenging to do this work not in person, and to provide support for people who are having to shelter in place within a shelter in place order.

**Allies in Change:**

They paused groups for a week to transition to video conferencing, email, teleconferencing, they have since resumed groups and they have been running for 4 weeks now. Admin staff had to be laid off, and Chris is not taking a salary at the moment. There is one person in the AIC office doing admin work. They are experiencing ~ 50% show rate for meetings and going remote has slowed down and presented challenges for payment processing. Therefore, income is down by 50% but costs remain the same. They are currently not charging for absences and are allowing clients to defer payment for the time being to help alleviate some financial stress for clients. Chris anticipates this resulting in later financial hits for AIC.

→ to this someone suggested not allowing for completion of the program if they have an unpaid balance.

→ Additionally, Multnomah County is prepared to incentivise paying outstanding balances with offering reduced supervision fees.

**A.R.M.S:**

Support groups are still being offered via zoom.

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Questions:

**Q:** P.O's → are providers still operating?

**A:** Multnomah County - As far as we know all providers are still operating. SoValTi is the only one that we believe is still offering an in-person group. Programs have shifted to teleconferencing/video conferencing, which is being treated the same as in person group attendance for financial purposes and probation requirements.

**A:** Washington County - yes still operating but no in person meetings are permitted. All programs have shifted to online and telephone platforms.

**A:** Clackamas County - services are still being provided, not in an in-person format. The only provider that we are unsure about how they are operating is Blackburn Center.

**Q:** What is the expectation for clients in groups regarding the Survivor Impact Panel? Will they be able to complete the program if it's not possible to fulfill that requirement?

**A:** People are not expected to complete requirements that they literally cannot at this time.

**Q:** similarly, what is the status of polygraphs?

**A:** there is possibly one examiner operating in Washington County, but most are not operating at this time. People can't be expected to do things that they simply cannot, and it won't be considered a violation.

**Q:** How does this impact No Contact Orders, if a Polygraph is a requirement for removal of the order?

**A:** Unsure. It may result in a longer period of no contact until those requirements can be actually met. Follow up is needed here.

\*Chris notes that it may be important to communicate with the partner to evaluate the reasons for removing the no contact order. \*

**Q:** What are you hearing from partners of clients?

**A:** It is a little worrisome that we are hearing a lot less from partners. People are very focused on other issues. Most of the interaction with partners has been regarding child safety and welfare and contact orders. Less reports of actual IPV/DV. The financial difficulty at this time is a point of focus.

**A:** It is pretty safe to assume that there is more DV happening, and there is a large lack of disclosure of it. A good future goal of groups is to try to draw out disclosures from clients in groups.

**A:** Women's groups are seeing no more disclosures than other groups.

**Q:** Has there been difficulty contacting probationers who may not have access to tech?

**A:** some have run into "phone tag", but they have ultimately been able to get in contact with everyone they need to.

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It was speculated that a similar phenomenon may be occurring that we also see during the holidays where there is an increase in DV but that is not reflected in the amount of reporting during that time. A spike in reporting is seen following that period.

Several providers have heard from their clients that they are very unhappy because their partner will not let them have contact or see their children on their scheduled days. Many of them express understanding of why that may be happening but are frustrated nonetheless. Victim services and probation have been working on addressing these concerns with technology but it is very complicated and often difficult to arrange.

**Technology challenges:**

A challenge that some have run into is that email is not a typically favored form of communication with clients. User error (mis-entered addresses) has led to difficulty

getting in touch with clients, and having them participate in groups. Additionally, there has been a learning curve adapting to online programs such as zoom. It is an incredibly useful tool but can take a period of adjustment to get comfortable with it. This has been difficult for some less tech savvy facilitators. Additionally, there are some (few) clients who don't have any way to maintain contact with their program. This has been a challenge that people are unsure how to address. Chris mentions a provider in NY that has many clients who have zero access to technology and they are scrambling to get those clients burner phones, in order to maintain contact.

Some have had some instability with video conferencing platforms and some providers are worried about overloaded platforms and how that may play out in the future. Others have run into issues mostly with unstable wifi. Some have mitigated that by having clients drive to places with stronger service.

There has been international concern regarding the efficacy of video groups. Some have raised concerns that holding meetings in the home may result in more agitation in the men and ultimately trigger abusive behavior. However, within this meeting providers have not experienced that. The primary concern for this group is maintaining confidentiality and appropriate behavior.

**Referrals?** → some providers have gotten referrals and a few new clients, but generally the intake rate is down. The modified court system has affected this, and when things get up and running again there may be a bump in intake rates for BIPs.