

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network Meeting Minutes March 12, 2019

Present: Chris Huffine (Allies in Change), Carrie Kirkpatrick (DCJ-DV Unit), Jacquie Pancoast (Central City Concern), Regina Holmes (ARMS), Guruseva Mason (Safety First), Nick Guerrero (Raphael House), Christina McGovney (Raphael House), PJ Bennington McCary (VOA Home Free), Kelly Brezinski (DHS Child Welfare), Krystal Duff (Bridges 2 Safety), Jessica Harvey (Allies in Change), Maggie Gilman Holm (REACH CDC), Tammy Davis (DVSD-Survivor Panelist), Matt Johnston (DVSD), Kate Sackett Kerrigan (Portland State University), Phil Broyles (Teras Counseling, Inc.)

Minutes by Jessica Harvey, edited by Chris Huffine

Discussion Topic: Survivor Impact Panel Presentation

Presentation by Matt Johnston, Tammy Davis, and Kate Sackett Kerrigan from DV Safe Dialogue

Survivor Impact Panels (SIP) were originally created by Ericka Goerling and Angela Lehr in Washington County back in the late 1990s as a means of increasing the empathy, awareness, and accountability of abusive partners. The Domestic Violence Safe Dialogue program took over the management of those panels a number of years ago. The original inspiration were DUI panels where people charged with a DUI would need to attend a panel where victims of drunken car crashes would speak about the consequences.

Attendees are abusive partners who have been enrolled in a BIP for at least six months and have gotten past the pre-contemplation stage of change. They must display some receptivity to how abusive behavior affects others. The program refers those individuals to a panel when they think they are ready, so pre-registration is required. They pay a fee to attend (currently \$30). The SIP lasts for 2 hours. It is typically staffed by Matt Johnston. Occasionally there are others present (e.g., a probation officer, a BIP staff member) who help to monitor/manage the group. There is a brief introduction explaining the format for the night and outlining how the attendees should listen to maximize their benefit from being there. There are typically three survivors who briefly talk about their abusive relationships for 15-20 minutes. This is followed by a facilitated Q & A session in which attendees get to ask the panelists questions. At the end the attendees fill out a brief survey and leave. Panelists stay behind and debrief the session.

Kate Sackett Kerrigan is doing her dissertation on the DVSD Survivor Impact Panels. She provided an overview of her research. Please refer to the attached pdf of her PowerPoint presentation for more information.

How the Panelists Benefit

- Empowering processes – The survivor speaking has control over the panel process and each one can affirm the other
- Relationship building – Speakers affirm the men's efforts to change and audience members relate to speakers
- Encouraging offender change – Speakers challenge audience members and audience members affirm speakers.

Perceived Panel Impact

- Speaker healing – Speaker are validated and able to reframe their abuse
- Offenders reach new understandings – Offenders experience discomfort and it lowers their resistance.
- Offender empathy and motivation – Offenders take their own victim's perspectives and express desire to change.
- Both speakers and offenders are able to break through their own plateaus of growth and change

Restorative Justice Principles

- Survivor-offender exchange
- Repairing harm
- Re-envisioning roles to promote justice

There is not much available research on IPV panels. One reason is because IPV is currently excluded from restorative justice programs. Recent panel studies have limited use due to the different processes in the different areas where the studies were performed. For example, in some areas there is no questions and answer process and sometimes the panels are held in a courtroom. The question and answer process of the panel has been found to increase accountability, bravery, the opportunity to grow, and the impact on children. Though impact panels do not involve people from the same relationship, they have similar outcomes as with restorative justice, which does include those who were involved in the incident.

The present study was qualitative based with some quantitative elements. It involved observations of the panels, a focus group, interviews with those who send offenders to the panels, an interview with a man who attended the panel, and surveys to others who attended. Researchers found that the most dynamic stage of the panel process is when the offenders ask follow-up questions to the panel. There can be validation and apologies from the offenders and healing for the speakers during this process. For example, one offender indicated that it was difficult and uncomfortable to hear the impact on children but it was what he needed to hear in order to realize the impact in the moment and the continued impact. Before attending the panel, offenders expect to be attacked by the speakers, but they are able to relax once they realize this is not the case.

Future research will focus on pretest and posttest surveys of their experience and specific observational checklists. It might also be helpful to look at the long-term effect of the panel. The short-term nature of the intervention makes it unlikely that there would be an obvious long-term impact.

It is important that attendees debrief their experience of the SIP the next time they attend their group. This also presents an opportunity for further discussion of how abusive behavior affects the abused partners. Suggested debriefing questions for BIP providers.

- What was the panel like for you?
- What does that say about your own story?
- What does the rest of the group think about what he just said?

Only pre-registered abusive partners can attend. It is vital that BIPs are careful who they refer.

Screening before the panels for those sending offenders

- No psychopaths
- Nobody that has reached maximum benefit
- Offender has attended a minimum 26 sessions
- Don't send them before they are ready
- It's okay to mess up, and please examine what can be done differently in the future

How is a panel speaker chosen?

- Survivors know when they are ready
- There is a speaker's workshop
- They can speak for 20 minutes straight
- Their response when triggered during a panel

Barriers to attendees being impacted

- "I wasn't as bad as that"
- Not connecting to story
- long day/tired
- impaired or intoxicated
- stirs something up or triggers their own trauma

Let POs know when a man is ready to go to the panel or if they should never go to a panel. POs can act as audience behavior consultants during the panels. Support is needed in Clackamas County to start a panel there in the form of mandates from Clackamas PO.

Any questions about this presentation or for more information contact Matt Johnston at matt@dvstdprogram.com.