

Remembering and Responding

Volume 1 Issue 3
November 2006

Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Newsletter

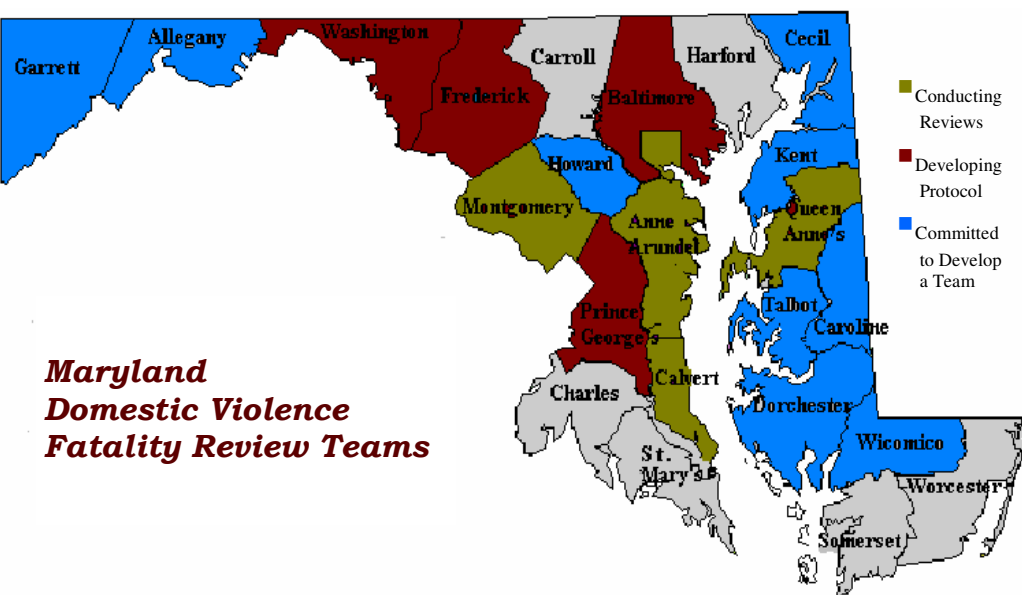
Recommendations Should Evoke Social Change

In an article about recommendations in the Fatality Review Bulletin (Spring 2006), Robin Thompson states that one of the main reasons for fatality review “is to review domestic violence deaths and incidents so that the community can intervene and help prevent further acts of domestic violence. At the core of this intervention and prevention goal is change: namely social change in the way things might have been done prior to the domestic violence incidents they have reviewed.” “Evoking social change” is a serious responsibility. It is easy for individuals appointed to a DVFRT to “go through the motions” and to see the appointment as yet another task. It is quite another to comprehend that a life might have been saved if the system had responded to the considerable plight of domestic violence victims in a different way. Domestic violence is a social problem that requires social change. Make your recommendations count!



How to Make Recommendations Count

- **Informal member communications** can serve as vehicles for change.
- Link recommendations to **data**.
- Link recommendations to **cases where recommendation may have changed outcome**.
- **Track implementation** of recommendations and follow-up.
- Think of **different approaches** to promote implementation.
- “**Trumpet the differences** you have made!”
- Work with the **media**.



**Maryland
Domestic Violence
Fatality Review Teams**

Quarterly Newsletter

This newsletter is a product of the Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Council. The Council provides support for DVFRTs, encourages jurisdictions to consider establishing a team, discusses relevant issues, and offers recommendations for change. The Council consists of the chairpersons, vice-chairs, and other representatives of Maryland review teams, and is assisted by the MNADV.



Maryland Review Teams

Anne Arundel County
Operating since 2003. David Cordle, Chairperson.

Calvert County
Operating since 2004. Janet Scott, Chairperson.

Montgomery County
Operating since December 2005, developing its protocol. Laura Chase, Chairperson.

Queen Anne's County
Operating since January 2006, developing its protocol. Frank Kratovil, Chairperson.

Baltimore City
Operating since January 2006, developing its protocol. Dorothy Lennig, Chairperson.

Baltimore County
Operating since May 2006, developing its protocol. Marci Van De Mark, Coordinator.

Prince George's County
Operating since May 2006, developing its protocol. Jennifer Murphy, Coordinator.

Washington County
Operating since June 2006, developing its protocol. Col. Doug Mullendore, Coordinator.

Frederick County
Operating since October 2006, first team meeting scheduled. Mary Howser, Coordinator.



Regional Fatality Review Conference

Six members of the Council will attend a regional fatality review conference in Princeton, NJ, on December 7-8. Topics will include research findings on femicide, models and practices for approaching and engaging in case review process, and comparative program evaluation. Dr. Jackie Campbell, who is a member of the Baltimore City DVFRT, will be the keynote speaker. Other states sending representatives are CT, NY, PA, NJ, DE, and GA.

An Emerging Issue: Confidentiality and Near Fatalities

The Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Council has tackled an emerging issue: for programs and agencies that are bound by confidentiality with clients—how to honor their pledge of confidentiality while knowing that there is the possibility that a client's case could one day come before a DVFRT? This is especially pertinent with near fatalities.

Some Considerations...

- Georgia obtains the consent of the victim. When screening the case, if the victim prefers that the case not be reviewed, the team simply respects the victim's wishes.
- Such contact, which itself must be done safely, may also determine if the victim's safety is still in jeopardy. If so, especially if the victim and the abuser are together, the team should not review the case, but should consider lethality assessment protocols.
- One Virginia DVFRT recommendation (adopted) was to establish a multi-disciplinary domestic violence incident team to review reported cases. Similar to the Lethality Assessment protocol, such a team engages other disciplines besides law enforcement and the domestic violence program. It proactively seeks to prevent death and provide services.



Recommendations: Final Notes

Robin Thompson observes that "...as fatality review teams grow in number and sophistication, it is vital that our work be cumulative and reflective.

Fatality review teams have already accomplished significant changes in attitudes, policies, and practices. This success should reinforce our dedication and enthusiasm for evoking social change to end domestic violence fatalities." (FRB, Spring/Summer 2006)

- DVFRTs derive influence from their determination and capability to affect change. Without constructive change, fatality reviews are meaningless.
- Remember: Fatalities aren't always the result of system failure. But **can change improve** how the system responds to domestic violence?
- Look for Robin Thompson's complete **articles on recommendations** in the Spring/Summer and Spring 2006 issues of the NDVFRI Bulletin at www.ndvfri.org.

Congratulations

To **Queen Anne's County** for being the first county since **Anne Arundel** and **Calvert** to conduct reviews, and to **Montgomery County** and **Baltimore City** for completing their protocols and preparing to conduct case reviews.

Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence

6911 Laurel Bowie Road,
Suite 309
Bowie, MD 20715
(301) 352-4574
info@mnadv.org
www.mnadv.org

