

# Remembering and Responding

Volume 3 Issue 2  
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## Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Newsletter

### Fatality Review Progress



Through August 2008 we have 16 fatality review teams organized and 7 committed to go forward. Twelve are reviewing cases; four are in the protocol process. Two are preparing to organize, and we will work with the remaining five counties to organize over the coming year. Most teams review cases in a manner that genuinely focuses on making change. Some teams do this better than others, and we encourage teams that want to compare how they conduct review meetings to observe other teams' sessions. Attending other teams' meetings as observers has proven to be helpful. Try it!

### Follow-up "To Do" Lists

Teams find that the review of a case often carries over into second and sometimes subsequent meetings. This is usually a sign that the review is comprehensive and that the team has developed new areas of examination. Maintaining an organized "to do" list is key to keeping meetings on track. One team sends out its "to do" list with its meeting reminder. Another distributes a three-columned worksheet to each member at each meeting. The columns list "findings," "recommendations," and "follow-up." During the meeting, members jot down their own personal notes based on the discussion and submit their worksheets to the chairperson at the end of the meeting. The chairperson later compiles the information and can lead well-organized discussions about potential recommendations and to notify members about items needing follow-up. Such a tracking system could be beneficial to your team. Consider it.



### Quarterly Newsletter

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



### Maryland Review Teams

#### Anne Arundel County

Operating since October 2003  
Anastasia Prigge, Chairperson  
Cheryl Tyiska, Vice Chairperson

#### Calvert County

Operating since 2004  
Jennifer Morton, Chairperson  
Janet Scott, Vice Chairperson

#### Montgomery County

Operating since 2005  
Laura Chase, Chairperson  
Hannah Sassoon, Vice Chairperson

#### Baltimore City

Operating since 2006  
Dorothy Lennig, Chairperson  
Julie Drake, Vice Chairperson

#### Queen Anne's County

Operating since January 2006  
Frank Kratovil, Chairperson  
Ron Russum, Vice Chairperson

#### Baltimore County

Operating since May 2006  
Marcy Van De Mark, Coordinator

#### Prince George's County

Operating since May 2006  
Judy Wolfer, Chairperson  
Ann Wagner-Stewart, Vice Chairperson

#### Washington County

Operating since June 2006  
Vicki Sadehvandi, Chairperson

#### Frederick County

Operating since October 2006  
Mary Howser, Chairperson  
Lt. Ted Nee, Vice Chairperson

#### Garrett County

Operating since June 2007  
Lisa Thayer Welch, Coordinator

#### St. Mary's County

Operating since May 2007  
Ella Mae Russell, Coordinator

#### Allegany County

Operating since May 2007  
David Goad, Chairperson  
Richard Paulman, Vice Chairperson

#### Harford County

Operating since August 2007  
Stephanie McAtee, Coordinator

#### Howard County

Operating since November 2007  
Devora Pontell and Sergeant  
Steve Martin, Co-Chairpersons

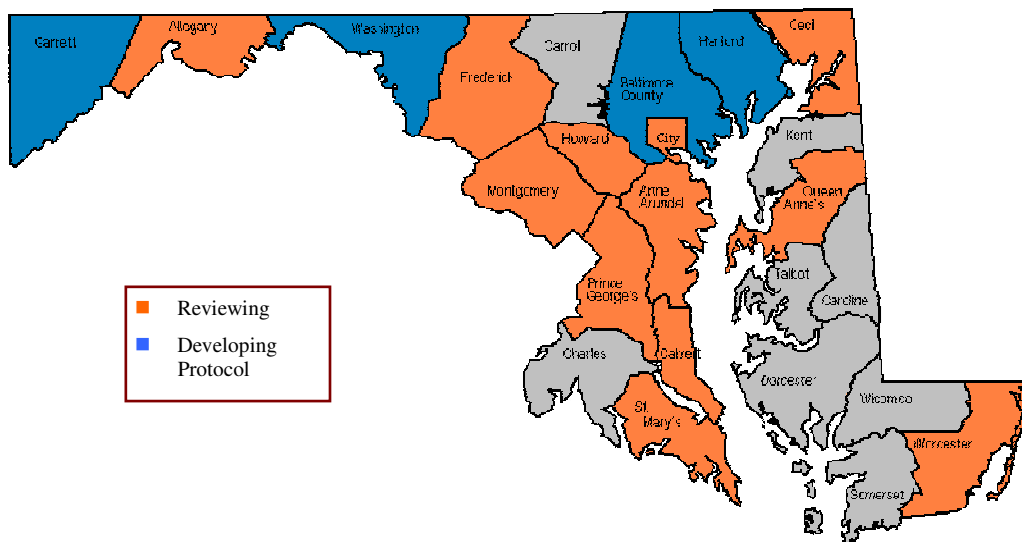
#### Worcester County

Operating since November 2007  
Joel Todd, Chairperson  
Marty Pusey, Vice Chairperson

#### Cecil County

Operating since December 2007  
Gary Pierce, Chairperson  
Al Michaels, Vice Chairperson

### Maryland Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams September 2008



## Timelines

Written timelines have been a significant part of protocol development since we have begun fatality review in Maryland. Teams that use timelines know how helpful they are to case review. They organize reviews, simplify case presentation, efficiently include all the important case information, and minimize distracting questions during reviews. A sample timeline is on the MNADV web site. Try it; you'll like it.

## Adding New Team Members

Fatality review teams should be a community effort, not just composed of members who represent the system. We continue to advocate for teams to provide for community representation by including, for example, survivors of domestic violence and members of the clergy. Why? In the case of survivors, who better understands the issue we are trying to tackle? In the case of the clergy, that's who victims speak with. One study found that of 400 victims, 2% had reported their situation to a domestic violence program; yet a resounding 70% had spoken with a clergyman about the abuse! Consider how these additions might improve your team's review process.



## Individual vs. Systemic: Can You Meld the Two?



A difficult issue that some teams grapple with is how to engage people, usually family members and often children, left to deal with the aftermath of a homicide or suicide. Because teams are comprised of members who provide service to others, they want to reach out and help those particular individuals. Teams should remain mindful of their mission: to create systemic change. How does this case help you to see how gaps in the system can be plugged or how system improvements can be made? The findings of the particular case should result in recommendations that can be applied to the system. Does this mean that you are precluded from helping individuals? No. But the effort to help must maintain the confidentiality required by law and not jeopardize the safety of any of the individuals you are seeking to help. In addition, assistance should probably be provided within the context of an agency that would normally render the services being considered. How you go about making this happen should be the subject of discussion and agreement by the team.

## Annual Report Time

It will be time, perhaps sooner than you're ready. At least 12 teams will be producing annual reports next year for CY 2008. Writing an annual report can be daunting. One of the purposes of an annual report is to "evoke change." What will evoke change is the substance of your findings and recommendations, not how the report looks. The latter is a consideration because you want to take pride in your product. The former will more likely create change. Look at the simplicity of the Baltimore City report (on the MNADV web site). Of course, what will be important to influencing change is the team's will to see that change occurs and continuing to follow-up on recommendations that have not yet been acted upon.



## Statewide Annual Report

In 2009 the MNADV plans to take all annual reports prepared by county teams and create one centralized report for statewide dissemination. We hope this will be the beginning of an effort to take some of your county recommendations and give them a statewide application.



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