Save the Date!
Teleconference with Dr. Neil Websdale
Changing Some Ways Maryland Teams Operate

On January 31st from 1:30—3:30 p.m., the MNADV will host a teleconference for all our DVFRTs: officers, coordinators, and members. Dr. Neil Websdale, Director of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative (NDVFRI) will participate. The focus of the conversation will be to examine how we fundamentally operate as teams and whether there are adaptations we can make that will facilitate our effectiveness.

How Well Does Our Team Do? Really! We have 19 active DVFRTs, which is a credit to you because DVFRT time and efforts are “in-kind.” That factor alone presents a host of logistical impediments that you have largely overcome. There are other factors to be sure, such as, team organization and membership, developing recommendations and putting them into practice. At this point, one stands out: how sufficiently do team members understand the concept of systemic change?

Are we getting the job done? In a recent discussion at the MNADV, it was observed that many people in the system are not necessarily oriented toward making system changes, that many of us are practical problem solvers. The observations of many meetings bear out how hard you have pushed yourselves to make the DVFRT process work. However, the bottom line is always: Are we really getting the job done? The sense is that with some teams it has been difficult to claim success, and that attitude obviously can come to negatively affect team performance and self-perception and generate an assessment that DVFRT meetings are not worth what we’re putting into them.

Taking a closer look at the DVFRT process. We hear about football teams having to adapt their “systems” to the talents of their players to achieve success. Perhaps it’s a matter of the process we’re employing. The DVFRT process across the country is a relatively new dynamic that arrived in the early 90’s and modeled itself in part upon reviews conducted in the medical and aviation fields. Domestic violence fatality review has moved very quickly and is in a majority of states. Our own county-oriented process is one of the biggest such processes and not many states have our model and volume. So, maybe it’s that we need to take a closer look at how we’re doing business and make adjustments to fit the real limitations under which we operate.

Join us on January 31, 2013 from 1:30-3:30 p.m. for a teleconference. Please RSVP by January 24th so we can notify you of the teleconference information to the following survey monkey link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KTYG9GB

We look forward to the conversation!

Maryland Review Teams

Allegany County, Est. 2007
Chairperson: David Goad
Vice Chairperson: Richard Paulman

Anne Arundel County, Est. 2003
Chairperson: Joan Stamnitz
Vice Chairperson: Vacant

Baltimore City, Est. 2006
Chairperson: Dorothy Lennig
Vice Chairperson: Lt. Rhonda McCoy

Baltimore County, Est. 2006
Chairperson: Marc Van De Mark
Vice Chairperson: Rosalyn Branson

Calvert County, Est. 2004
Chairperson: Sergeant Timothy Fridman
Vice Chairperson: Vacant

Carroll County, Est. 2008
Chairperson: Connie Sgarlata
Vice Chairperson: Chief Jeff Spaulding

Cecil County, Est. 2007
Chairperson: Gary Pierce
Vice Chair: Chief Chip Peterson

Charles County, Est. 2008
Chairperson: Tony Covington
Vice Chairperson: Lt. Steve Salvas

Dorchester County, Est. 2008
Chairperson: Bill Jones
Vice Chairperson: Bill McConnell

Frederick County, Est. 2006
Co-Chairpersons: Michelle Pentony and Theresa Heigel

Garrett County, Est. 2007
Coordinator: Lisa Thayer Welch
Vice Chairperson: Brenda LeMay

Harford County, Est. 2007
Chairperson: Steve Lentowski
Vice Chairperson: Robert McCord

Howard County, Est. 2007
Co-Chairperson: JoAnna Miller
Co-Chairperson: Luanne McKenna

Montgomery County, Est. 2005
Chairperson: Laura Chase
Vice Chairperson: Hannah Sassoon

Prince George’s County, Est. 2006
Chairperson: Judy Wolfer
Vice Chairperson: Ann Wagner-Stewart

St. Mary’s County, Est. 2007
Co-Chairperson: Ella Mae Russell
Co-Chairperson: Sheriff Timothy Cameron

Washington County, Est. 2006
Chairperson: Vicki Sadehvandi
Vice-Chairperson: Melissa Bartles

Wicomico County, Est. 2009
Chairperson: Joel Todd
Vice Chairperson: Michelle Hughes

Worcester County, Est. 2007
Chairperson: Marty Pusey
Vice Chairperson: Bridgette Saulsbury
Community, Civic Engagement, and Democracy: The Case of Domestic Violence Fatality Review, by Dr. Neil Websdale. The article has been forwarded with the Update transmitting this newsletter. Websdale examines the rise of domestic violence fatality review from the context of the “reviewing arts” in the aviation, nuclear, and medical fields and how these “straddle the divide between state and civil society, refining our notions of governance, and creating new democratic spaces, opportunities, and practices.”

Websdale goes on to look at Montana’s review of cases and the dynamic that has grown from that. Please view the video about the Montana review process at: http://www.motofilmsllc.com/STOP/motofilmsllc.com.html, and you are encouraged to set up a showing for your team, even if you’ve already watched it. The video demonstrates the humanity of the review process.

Websdale says that the purpose of a team “...is to re-create or construct a sense of how the victim and perpetrator made the choices they did. ...Part of the art of review is to re-create the victim’s world-view....Where team members might theoretically explain the array of services the state has to offer, they know full well that victims do not see...services as a logical assemblage....Many victims engage state services as one might enter a confusing, alienating maze....(M)any victims encounter services while dealing with bone-chilling fear. Learning how victims maneuvered in the grip of such fear becomes part of the complex task of unraveling how services might be offered differently. This is hard work. It is not for the fainthearted.”

Statewide Annual DVFRT Report


The report is an effort to document the work of our Maryland teams and to help move recommendations to adoption. Please use the report to further your own team efforts.

NDVFRI National Conference in Phoenix, AZ

The National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative will host a national conference in Phoenix from May 19-21, 2013. More information coming soon!

Witness Tampering Brochure

The Harford County DVFRT recently obtained the following brochure entitled “Witness Tampering Is Against the Law.” The brochure was created by the Arizona state University Diana Halle Center for Family Justice. Harford has graciously made it available to all teams. The brochure is transmitted along with this newsletter and can be updated by placing your own jurisdiction’s contact information in the center panel.

MNADV Memorial Service

MNADV’s annual Memorial Service will be on February 11, 2013 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in Annapolis. We encourage DVFRT members to attend. See www.mnadv.org for more information.