

the LINK

Connecting you to the
National Resource Center
on Domestic Violence

Network Directory

The Domestic Violence Resource Network (DVRN) is a national network of five resource centers funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide comprehensive information and technical assistance, and to promote research, policy analysis and program development on various aspects of domestic violence. The

DVRN includes:

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

800-537-2238

TTY 800-553-2508

FAX: 717-545-9456

Focuses on enhancing community response to and prevention of domestic violence

Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection/ Custody

800-527-3223

FAX: 702-784-6160

Specializes in child protection and custody within the context of domestic violence

Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence

888-Rx ABUSE

(888-792-2873)

FAX: 415-252-8991

Addresses health care system response to domestic violence

Battered Women's Justice Project

800-903-0111

TTY 612-824-8768

FAX: 612-824-8965

Addresses three main areas: criminal justice system response to domestic violence including the development of batterers' programs; civil court access and legal representation issues of battered women; and issues raised when battered women are accused of committing crimes, including killing an abusive partner

National Resource Center to End Violence Against

Native Women

877-RED-ROAD (733-7623)

FAX: 605-341-2472

Focuses on developing a coordinated agency response in American Indian/Alaska Native tribal communities regarding domestic violence and sexual assault.

A Retrospective...

by Beth Schnorr

(The following is the first in a series of articles that will look at the history of the domestic violence movement, explore the present and look to the possibilities of the future.)

"The Domestic Violence Movement." Twenty years ago those words sent a rush of adrenaline through me. In those early years the women I saw as leaders of the movement were powerful, articulate, empowering and oh so clear. Their visions of change came from the stories of real women's lives. They spoke of working together as activists for social change and justice. I felt drawn to be a part of this "movement." It was my connection to a long line of feminists who came before me.

Our work started with listening to the stories. We established 24-hour crisis lines to establish a link to one another. We heard stories of pain, confusion and torture. The stories were overwhelming - so many women! We told each other we didn't deserve this and said, "call the police, go to your mom's, get out!" We knew this really wasn't the answer -- the police wouldn't do anything, and mom didn't really want us. We needed something more; we needed a place of safety, somewhere to go in a time of crisis. Shelter became the answer, everything would be okay once we got away. The idea of a shelter was a radical notion then; it had almost an Underground Railroad type of feel to it. Shelters became the symbol of women's freedom.

Most of us working in the movement then were battered and formerly battered women. We didn't always know that. But, as we continued to listen to the stories of the women who were now coming to shelter, we realized these were our stories. We had crisis lines and shelters, and we were finding our voice. Most of the shelters were often makeshift at best, usually in older homes wherever we could find them. We had to focus on paying the rent, utility bills and finding food for the families that started to come in larger and larger numbers. Of course the women were coming with their children, so we put carpet on basement floors,

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brought in some used toys and called it a playroom. We were still years away from looking at the needs of children beyond that of play. Informal support groups formed as women in shelter shared their stories and gained strength from one another. Women wanted to know about other services in the community, so we developed referral lists. As women accessed these services we heard stories of re-victimization and misunderstanding. Our focus began to broaden, and we spoke of advocacy. We experimented, searched for allies and informed ourselves.

A lot of very powerful work was done during those years. A basic level of services that included shelter support groups, referrals and individual advocacy was considered to be essential to any program. I believe we held a vision of participation and inclusion of battered and formerly battered women as primary.

As programming moved beyond the level of providing basic services, issues such as co-optation, classism, professionalism and conflict began to change the “look” of our agencies and the quality of our work. I have noted comments made recently from advocates who have been around for a while that the women who come to our shelters now are dealing with far more complicated issues than ever before. Issues such as mental health, ritual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, homelessness, etc. I believe these were always there - these issues have defined women’s lives for a long time.

I see the fear that advocates have in dealing with these situations. Although we try to maintain a focus on advocacy, I see more and more programs focusing on “counseling” and what is wrong with women. We have more funding than ever before, but we also have more rules, more hierarchy and more degrees. And where are the battered women? Have we stopped listening to the stories because we feel we have heard them all before? A number of years ago a woman from my state expressed concern over what she saw happening in our movement. She developed the questions for programs to begin to assess how well they are meeting the needs of battered women. Twelve years later, I believe they are the questions we still need to ask ourselves.

- **Are battered women encouraged to grow and to participate at all levels of your program? (Thinking, discussing, planning, writing, speaking, experimenting)**
- **Are formerly battered women in high-level positions of power at your project or shelter? (paid staff, directors, policy-makers, board members)**
- **Is there a balance of battered women on your staff and board, — not merely “token” battered women?**
- **Instead of working as a mental health services model, does your project combine service provision and political development, including work on feminist issues and activism in the community?**
- **Does your project build mutually supportive systems for battered women overall? Does it actively work against class divisions and distinctions?**

Beth Schnorr is the director of Harbor House, a shelter in Appleton, Wisconsin.

Shelter Programs for Animals in Violent Homes

Dr. Frank Ascione at Utah State University is seeking information about domestic violence programs that are now or have worked with shelters, foster homes or other safe home arrangements for sheltering battered women’s companion or farm animals. Dr. Ascione wants to survey existing programs and coordinated efforts for sheltering animals of women fleeing abusive relationships to determine what types of programs, protocols and consent forms work best.

His prior research has already documented that the abusers of over two-thirds of battered women have threatened to or actually hurt a pet - a rate 15 times higher than men whose partners do not report domestic violence. He also found that nearly one in four sheltered battered women said that concern for their pets’ welfare had prevented them from going to a shelter sooner.

If you are involved in or know of any domestic violence programs that work to shelter battered women’s animals, please contact Frank R. Ascione, Ph.D. with information on how to contact you and the program at Department of Psychology, Utah State University, Logan, Utah 84322-2810, tel. 435-797-1464 or e-mail him at FrankA@coe.usu.edu.

Dr. Frank Ascione is a professor in the Department of Psychology and adjunct professor in Family and Human Development at Utah State University. Dr. Ascione has published a number of articles on the development of antisocial and prosocial behavior in children, and has coedited two books *Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence*, and *Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention* (1998), both published by Purdue University Press.

Sacred Circle

National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women

Cangleska, Inc., a tribally chartered non-profit organization that provides domestic violence services to the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota, was awarded funds by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish Sacred Circle, National Resource Center to End Violence Against Native Women.

In June 1998, Sacred Circle opened its doors as the new resource center to join the Domestic Violence Resource Network which includes: the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, Battered Women's Justice Project, Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence, and Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody.

Like the other resource centers, Sacred Circle does not provide crisis intervention or direct ser-



Dedication ceremony at Sacred Circle opening



Sacred Circle staff

vices to victims. However, the center does provide resources to increase Indian Nations' capacity to provide direct services and advocacy to women and their children victimized by battering and sexual assault through technical assistance, model programming, training and information that is culturally relevant.

Sacred Circle is dedicated to actions that promote the sovereignty and safety of women and mandated by its mission statement is committed to change individual and institutional beliefs that justify the oppression of Native women.

For more information about Sacred Circle's services contact them at 1-877-RED-ROAD (733-7623) or fax 605-341-2472.

WELCOME

As many of you may know, Anne Menard has changed roles within the NRC. She has moved from the NRC Director to the NRC Special Projects Manager, a position focusing on Welfare issues particularly as they relate to domestic violence. So, we lose Anne in one role, but we are gaining Anne's expertise on this issue in another.

We welcome the new NRC Director, Kathleen Krenek, former Policy Development Coordinator of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Kathleen began her duties last June and we are pleased to have her considerable policy expertise and direct service experience as we forge ahead into the new millennium.

Advocacy of the Future...

Introducing VAWNet

The National Electronic Network on Violence Against Women (VAWnet) is a private online communications, networking, and information dissemination vehicle for state coalitions, national organizations and allied individuals working to end violence against women and their children. VAWnet will expand to include all state sexual assault coalitions, national organizations, and allied individuals over the next 3 years.

In 1996, VAWnet launched as a pilot project with 19 state domestic violence coalitions and 5 allied national organizations testing whether electronic networking could enhance their work to end violence against women. On October 15, 1998, VAWnet opened to include all state domestic violence coalitions and has phased in most allied national domestic violence organizations.

The cross country VAWnet team, comprised of advocates at state coalitions and allied organizations, is putting the finishing touches on the design of VAWnet. At the same time, staff and participants are also exploring opening up pieces of VAWnet to the public, allowing local advocates, battered women, and allies to access VAWnet materials directly.

Accessing VAWnet:

During this phase of VAWnet, state coalitions and national/regional organizations working to end violence against women are the primary participants on VAWnet and serve as conduits of information for the local programs, allies, and advocates they represent. Coalitions and organizations participating on VAWnet will develop their own individualized systems for disseminating information and posting queries for their programs/constituents.

Over the next few years we will explore ways to support public access to VAWnet - to create a "public face" of VAWnet where materials can be accessed by anyone seeking information generated and reviewed by advocates.

VAWNet Discussion Forums:

VAWnet connects state coalitions & national organizations to four programmatic areas called forums:

1. *The Applied Research Forum (ARF)* offers a range of applied research information that participants can put to practical use in advocacy, public education, policy, and other

areas identified. ARF also produces research summaries to assist advocates in their policy and program work.

2. *The Public Policy Forum* is the place to discuss and analyze policy issues of concern to battered women and those who provide advocacy and services to them. The Forum provides structured and facilitated discussions on specific public policy issues, as well as a wealth of information and resources supporting policy work at local, state and national levels.

3. *The State E-Net Forum* provides information and concrete support to state coalitions who are in various stages of developing state-based electronic networks, particularly those which connect local domestic violence programs with the coalition and other state-wide resources. Issues related to data collection services and protection order registries will also be explored.

4. *The State Coalition Forum* provides an area for information sharing, dialog and analysis of long-standing, current, or emerging issues of concern to state coalitions and allied organizations and individuals.

Discussions related to provisions of the Violence Against Women Act as well as information to support the responsible and effective implementation of VAWA and related federal legislation are interspersed throughout the four forums.

The VAWnet Library is beginning to create collections of high quality resources to support those persons working to end violence against women. VAWnet participants can search, read, copy, download files, print, use, and distribute these materials to local programs and other individuals. To ensure useful and diverse materials, the Library has a Recommendations & Review process so that VAWnet participants can collaboratively choose and review material for placement in the VAWnet Library Collections. Staff are looking for recommendations of material that are useful to participants in their work. (i.e. fact sheets; grassroots & herstory pieces; state statutes; public education, outreach and training materials; research summaries; policy analysis; etc.)

VAWnet has been created to support everyone who is working to end violence against women and children. You are encouraged to access VAWnet through your state coalition, regional or national organization or other institute/resource center. You will be able to recommend materials, request information and follow analysis and discussions.



How Are We Doing Currently?

The introductory article by Beth Schnorr asks, "Where are the voices of battered women in our programs today?" The Documenting Our Work project is one effort of the NRC that is working to assure that voices of battered women are heard and acted on.

The Documenting Our Work Project (DOW) is a special initiative currently underway in the NRC that is designed to describe and assess the impact of the work of the battered women's movement on the lives of battered women and their children; ensure this work is accountable to battered women; help answer questions we have about our efforts to end domestic violence; and inform related state and national data collection efforts and research agendas. This project places particular emphasis on understanding the impact of the battered women's movement on the lives of traditionally underserved battered women.

The DOW project, in collaboration with advocates and researchers from across the country, is developing a set of measures and strategies that consistently and over time, document the impact of our work, the work of domestic violence local programs and state coalitions on the lives of battered women. A major focus of this effort is to keep the work of programs and coalitions accountable to battered women in the context of complex realities. The DOW project prioritizes issues of confidentiality and research ethics, and seeks to model an empowering, participatory and inclusive approach to the focus group and measurement development process. Collectives of domestic violence survivors and advocates working with traditionally underserved battered women (identified here as: battered African American, Native/Indian, Latina and Asian women, battered immigrant/migrant women, battered women with disabilities, battered older women, teens experiencing dating violence, battered rural women, and battered lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgendered people) are identifying issues and priorities to be integrated into a draft conceptual framework, including specific measures and strategies to document our work. This framework will be widely distributed for comments and pilot tested within the next year.

Survivors and advocates *working with traditionally underserved battered women* who are interested in informing this project are invited to submit answers to the following DOW focus group questions:

Please identify the group or groups of battered women/survivors to whom you are making reference in your answers to the questions listed below.

1. What pleases, excites, and/or reassures you about how domestic violence programs you are familiar with respond to traditionally underserved battered women?

2. What frustrates, angers, and/or disappoints you about how domestic violence programs you are familiar with respond to traditionally underserved battered women?

3. What kinds of services, efforts, issues are most important to traditionally underserved battered women?

4. What do you see your community doing to help/support traditionally underserved battered women and advocates and others working to end domestic violence?

5. What do you see your community doing which hurts and/or is not helpful to traditionally underserved battered women and advocates and others working to end domestic violence?

6. If you are familiar with state domestic violence coalitions, what do you see as the role of a state domestic violence coalition? Please specify your thoughts regarding the role of state domestic violence coalitions vis-à-vis survivors and advocates with traditionally underserved battered women.

7. Describe any positive and /or negative experiences you or your program have had with researchers or program evaluators.

8. Identify future research topics which you feel are needed to respond to domestic violence in your program, community or coalition, and/or action research questions you have had about traditionally underserved battered women's experiences with domestic violence.

If you are interested in informing the DOW project and receiving project updates and materials when available, please send (via fax, US mail or e-mail) your name, organization, contact information (address, phone, fax and e-mail) and any written communications/materials to:

Anuradha Sharma, Special Projects Coordinator
6400 Flank Drive, Suite 1300
Harrisburg, PA 17112-2778
fax: 717-545-9456
specialprojects@pcadv.org

Your comments, insights, concerns and recommendations regarding current evaluation tools, outcome measures, data collection instruments and research related to domestic violence/intimate partner violence and other forms of violence against women are welcome.

