

FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
February 23, 2011
Room 14, Potomac Building
5:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

Council in Attendance: Judge Karen Abrams, Krisanne Bentley, Kimberly Gregory, Rona Harding, John Helldorfer, Laura Joyce, Kathy Lacer, Lanny Lancaster, Dr. Kathy O'Brien, Bob Rezza, Sue Sabo, Elizabeth Schaeffer, Christina Taylor

Other attendees: Heather Bauer (Walden Sierra,) Sgt. R.W. Russell, Sarah Gray, Lisa Thomas, Patricia Campbell, Kristan Thomas

Absent: Sheriff Tim Cameron, Nancy Luginbill, Ella May Russell, Judge Greg Wells

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kathy O'Brien at 5:00 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes approved with one correction to the spelling of Krisanne Bentley's name.

II. Status Reports:

SART report: Elizabeth Schaeffer provided a brief update.

Child Advocacy: no update

Committee Updates:

Fatality Review Committee:

Lt. Russell provided the findings of the Fatality Review which included 1) the assailants background information was not available for the Judge to use in making decisions, 2) the victim did not readily accept help, 3) there was no notification to the victim of the assailants release from incarceration. The recommendations of the Committee included: 1) there needs to be aggressive follow up with the victim, 2) provide education to the public, 3) review service gaps between the Circuit and District Courts, 4) provide after fatality services not only to the direct parties involved but to family members as well, provide notice to the victim if the assailant has been released, and 5) to house all the different service participants that are included in the process in one building so there is better communication and coordination of resources. Christina Taylor said that a space may be available and she is discussing the possibility with the Sheriff.

Case Review Team (CRT)

Laura Joyce reviewed a case the CRT team worked on. She provided the newspaper article along with a packet of information that included the time line of the actions taken, the cost of services provided to the victim and the parties involved. Christina Taylor provided a more detailed background regarding the case and the victim's cooperation through out the process. Christina went on to elaborate that the victim's "living" concerns affected how the victim focused on/cooperated with the legal proceedings of the crime. Christina said that she contacted the case review team to obtain the resources needed to address the victim's "living" concerns. Once these concerns were addressed and taken care of, the victim was able to focus on and proceed with legal proceedings and building a case.

Other Business:

Gary Lynch informed the committee that Walden Sierra received two federal grants. One is for an additional counselor at the Three Oaks Center and the other is to provide housing for victims. Lanny Lancaster explained that churches are providing housing as well using buildings that the church owns and aren't necessarily using. A lot of what is being done now stems from the WARN program.

It was reported that Lethality Assessment Protocol is working well and making a difference. The assessment is being used in other areas besides the Sheriff's Office (i.e. crisis hotline, Walden Sierra counseling, DSS).

Dr. O'Brien provided an update regarding what's going on in legislation. She reported that Rape Crisis funds are being cut by 31%.

Krisanne Bentley with the Woman's Commission provided a letter to the committee that was sent to the Superintendent of St. Mary's Public Schools, Dr. Martirano, applauding his efforts to prevent bullying in the schools but also requesting that teen relationship violence be addressed to a greater extent than it currently is. Krisanne requested that FVCC also send a letter in conjunction with their letter to try to get more attention and action on the matter. Dr. O'Brien suggested that a representative from the school system come to a meeting to discuss the programs offered. This will be included in the March meetings agenda.

Heather Bauer with Walden Sierra reported they are currently in the process of getting literature/posters made to be mass distributed in places like the college regarding domestic violence. Dr. O'Brien provided some college news: they are going to be holding a "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" and "Take Back the Night". There is also a student group involved in educating students on healthy relationships and date rape.

Lanny Lancaster suggested a newspaper article about the efforts of the FVCC and information about resources available for victims. Dr. O'Brien asked Sue Sabo to speak with Karen Everett, the Public Information Officer for St. Mary's County, about doing an article.

V. Next Meeting / Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 at 5:00 pm-Potomac Bldg, Room #14

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Submitted by: Sue Sabo/Kristan Thomas, Recording Secretary