

**BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Meeting of April 4, 2005

Open session

Minutes

Voting Members Present (9): Sisan Smallman, RI Department of Corrections, Chair; Stephen King, RI Supreme Court, Vice Chair; Deb DeBare, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Honorable Elaine Bucci, RI District Court; Kristen Meuse, RI Justice Commission; Chief John LaCross, RI Police Chiefs Association; Beatriz Perez, RI Department of Health; Janie Dubois, Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit; John Brennan, Justice Assistance.

Seats Not Represented (4): Office of the Attorney General; Governor's Office; Center for Social Work Practice/BIP Representative; Urban League of RI.

Additional Participants (10): George Sheehan, RIBIP; Kathy Carty, Vantage Point; Sage Bauer, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Sharon Schwartz-Vanderhoff, Probation & Parole; Shelley Cortese, Probation & Parole; Kevin Murphy, Tri-Hab; Laura Jaworski, BIPSOC; Susan Wilkie, Family Violence Intervention/Kent Center; Micheline

Lombardi, Adult Probation & Parole; Fernando Comas, Adult Probation & Parole.

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda: April 4, 2005

Meeting Minutes: August 2, 2004; October 4, 2004; December 6, 2004

Certification Summary: RIBIP

Draft Revision summary

Comprehensive Standards revision: "Oversight Committee Draft Presentation"

Rules of Practice & Procedure: Section I., Article V., pertaining to Meetings (specifically quorum);

Section I., Article VI., pertaining to Committees (specifically membership)

Schedule of meetings for 2005

Sisan Smallman, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:10pm. New attendees were welcomed and introduced. Sisan reminded members that Channel 10, which is working on a feature ½ hour length story on domestic violence, will be filming some of the Oversight Committee meeting. They are interested in seeing some of the varied constituencies working together. The story will air on Channel 10 on Wednesday, April 27th at 7pm.

Review of Minutes

Due to a lack of quorum at the last meeting there were three sets of minutes pending approval.

Chief LaCross made a motion to adopt the August 2004 minutes. Janice Dubois seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; one (1) abstention (Judge Bucci). Motion carried.

Judge Bucci made a motion to adopt the October 2004 minutes. Stephen King seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Kristen Meuse made a motion to adopt the December 2004 minutes. Judge Bucci seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Review Subcommittee Report

Sisan Smallman reported that effective April 1, 2005, CODAC has ceased operating its batterers intervention program. A new entity, Rhode Island Batterers Intervention Program (“RIBIP”), has assumed the batterers intervention program functions formerly offered through CODAC. Mr. George Sheehan, formerly the director of CODAC’s batterers intervention program, is now the Executive Director of RIBIP. In transitioning from CODAC to RIBIP, clients and referring agencies should experience little if any difference: there is no change in the curriculum, staffing, or meeting locations.

Because Mr. Sheehan has provided written documentation that RIBIP will be essentially the same program as that previously offered under the auspices of CODAC, and because the program was in the process of being reviewed for certification, the Review Subcommittee has continued to process the application for comprehensive certification under the new name. Although comprehensive certification is not usually provided to a new program, the circumstances are such that RIBIP was able to seek comprehensive certification – and to undergo the more thorough review process involved – rather than provisional certification. The staff of RIBIP worked cooperatively with representatives of the Review Subcommittee throughout the certification process. The Review Subcommittee has reviewed the application, curriculum, case records, and other document reviews, and has completed a total of six (6) group observations. The Subcommittee is recommending comprehensive certification for two (2) years.

Judge Bucci requested more information regarding the transition from CODAC to RIBIP. George Sheehan, Executive Director of RIBIP, reported that CODAC had decided to cease its operation of batterers intervention and that “nothing else has changed”.

Deb DeBare made a motion to award Comprehensive Certification for RIBIP for two (2) years.

Kathy Carty reported concerns that she has regarding future support

for RIBIP. Previously, the batterers intervention program offered through CODAC received the support of that agency, in terms of staffing, meeting locations, etc. Sisan reported that the application for comprehensive certification was thoroughly reviewed by Review Subcommittee members. The transition from CODAC to RIBIP occurred not only in the middle of the review process, but written documentation from George Sheehan and CODAC has been provided to the Review Subcommittee that staffing, curriculum, meeting locations and all other relevant aspects of the batterers intervention program will remain the same as previously operated and offered when managed by CODAC. Chief LaCross was interested in CODAC's reason for ceasing operation of batterers intervention; George Sheehan reported that the agency was losing money due to non-payment of fees. George reported that he decided to operate the batterers intervention with a new business plan. Judge Bucci asked if George was owner or director; George reported that he is the owner of RIBIP as there are more grants available for the "for-profit" agencies.

Kevin Murphy reported that his understanding of the certification process was that agencies needed provisional certification before they were eligible to receive comprehensive certification. Stephen King stated that the provisional certification is a more basic process as agencies initially are only required to meet the three (3) legislatively mandated standards. Comprehensive certification is a more thorough review process. Janice Dubois reported that the

Oversight Committee may want to consider reviewing the provisional and comprehensive certification process in the future.

Kathy Carty reiterated her concerns regarding the anticipation of changes that RIBIP may experience as it transitions away from CODAC. CODAC had provided a great deal of support in operating a batterers intervention program. Kathy suggested that provisional certification should be considered as a means to assist in the transition until it has been completed. Sisan reported that logistical problems are to be worked out by George Sheehan and the staff at RIBIP; in reviewing the application, the Review Subcommittee members are looking at the substance of the program, curriculum, staffing, etc. Kathy raised the question of meeting locations/office space, which continues to be offered through CODAC. Sisan reported a change may occur with this arrangement in the future, but as of now, CODAC will allow RIBIP to continue to operate in the same space.

Deb DeBare reported that the intention of provisional certification is allow agencies time to build groups. As this has been done, Deb reported that it makes sense to move forward with the comprehensive certification process. Sisan reminded members that part of the agreement between the Oversight Committee and agencies is that certification may be revoked or suspended if necessary. Judge Bucci requested clarification on the provisional certification process and the downside of pursuing it in this situation. Stephen King reminded

members that the comprehensive certification of CODAC had begun when the announcement of the transition to RIBIP was made to Review Subcommittee members. Judge Bucci agreed, however reported that RIBIP is now a separate entity and therefore should be considered for provisional certification. Judge Bucci reported concerns that this situation will set a bad precedent in the future. Janice Dubois reported that when provisional certification was created, all programs were new and had a learning curve; RIBIP is at an advantage in that all aspects of the program already exist.

Deb asked members to consider the amount of volunteer labor that goes into the review process and what would actually be involved in having RIBIP go through the process again. Sisan reported that all relevant aspects of the program in regards to certification have already been reviewed, and that rules have been drafted in the Rules & Standards Subcommittee to address future situations similar to this. Kathy reiterated her concerns and stated that if provisional certification was considered, then the Subcommittee could then check in with RIBIP in six (6) months for comprehensive certification. Sisan reported that the purpose of provisional certification is really so that agencies can get groups up and running and the Subcommittee can complete group observations. Kathy stated that would be the time [before comprehensive certification] for RIBIP to address any extraordinary issues that arise from the transition and gain the support that is needed.

Stephen King reported that the Committee is looking at the

certification of this program, and possibly in the future the Committee may want to look at provisional and comprehensive certification process. Deb DeBare reported that it is not the role of the Oversight Committee to be concerned with “safety nets” for these agencies, regardless of status [i.e. for-profit, non-profit, etc.]. Judge Bucci questioned that if the Review Subcommittee already has sufficient evidence for comprehensive certification, then what barriers were present in pursuing provisional certification. She reported that her main concern is that RIBIP is a new entity, and questioned the problem in scheduling more site visits. Sisan reported that time plays a factor in this process as well, and that going for more group observations would prove disruptive for clients as members of the Subcommittee have already observed a total of six (6) sessions. Janice Dubois reported that this situation call into question the purpose of provisional certification.

Beatriz Perez reported that the Oversight Committee has to look at the timing of the transition, as well as the interpretation of provisional certification. It is not within the Oversight Committee’s authority to anticipate business problems. Deb DeBare agreed that the Oversight Committee will need to examine the intent of provisional certification. Chief LaCross inquired as to how long RIBIP will have to utilize the space through CODAC; George Sheehan reported that all sites are under a two (2) year lease by both parties. Chief LaCross suggested that a compromise be made whereby certification is granted for one (1) year. Sisan reported that regular monitoring is built into

certification. Chief LaCross asked George Sheehan if provisional certification would affect business negatively; George reported that in terms of time (six (6) months versus two (2) years of certification), provisional would have a negative impact.

Sisan reminded members that a motion remains on the floor.

Janice Dubois seconded the motion to award Comprehensive Certification to RIBIP for two (2) years. Eight (8) votes in favor; one (1) vote opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Sisan also reported that the comprehensive certification for Feedback expires today as no application was received for re-certification. Laura Jaworski had been in contact with Robert O'Neil, Director of Feedback, on various occasions to discuss alternatives, namely provisional certification. Provisional certification would have continued eligibility for referrals. Feedback is therefore no longer certified as a batterers intervention program; Sisan to give formal notice to Mr. O'Neil.

Sisan reported that the changes in certification for CODAC, RIBIP, and Feedback will be reflected on an updated listing of certified batterers intervention programs that will be distributed shortly. Sisan also reminded members that NRI is no longer a certified batterers intervention program [effective January 2005].

The Center for Social Work Practice and Galilee Mission to Fishermen have applications that are due for renewed comprehensive certification by May 1st, 2005. Sisan also reported that there have been inquiries for provisional certification within the past few months as well.

Rules & Standards Subcommittee Report

The Rules & Standards Subcommittee is nearing the end of its revision work to the Standards. Sisan directed members to the updated draft of the Standards revisions, as well as to the handout entitled “Draft Revision Summary”. Sisan reviewed what work has been done to date, as well as current work in progress. Most notably, the work in progress is a “Change in Business Operation” section which would encourage agencies to notify the Oversight Committee, Probation, etc., of any changes in operations so as to provide adequate time to plan accordingly. The Subcommittee will also revisit this section with the concerns regarding the transition of agency into another. Sisan reminded members that the process of formally adopting the revision is lengthy but would like to start moving along in this process. The Oversight Committee would need to approve the revisions; however Sisan has initiated an informal review by legal counsel at the Department of Corrections. The Office of the Attorney General would later conduct a formal review from a legal perspective, with public hearings and filing with the Secretary of State to follow. Sisan reported that hopefully this process will be fully

in motion by January 2006.

Sisan also updated members on the revisions to the Rules of Practice and Procedure. Most notable revision has occurred with the By-laws section of the Rules, specifically regarding subcommittee membership (Section I, Article VI. "Committees") and quorum requirements (Section I, Article V. "Meetings"). Sisan referred members to the handouts labeled as such.

Deb DeBare made a motion to place the draft revision of subcommittee membership be presented for formal vote of adoption at the June 6th, 2005 meeting. Chief LaCross seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Sisan opened the floor for discussion regarding the draft revisions for quorum requirements (two options were presented). Beatriz questioned the issue of the Oversight Committee making the decisions without various seats represented, and how can the Oversight Committee engage these individuals. Deb DeBare reported that seats would need to be changed legislatively; Sisan added that repeated efforts have been made to secure representation for various seats on the Committee. These individuals do remain on the Oversight Committee mailing/distribution list. Sisan reported that members were preferential to the second draft [at the April 2005

meeting] as members would like to see that business continues to be accomplished, but not by too small a group of people.

Deb DeBare made a motion for Draft #2 to be presented for formal vote of adoption at the June 6th, 2005 meeting. Janice Dubois seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Member Issues/Announcements

Beatriz Perez reported that Dr. David Gifford is the Acting Director of the department of Health. Laura Jaworski will make the appropriate updates to the distribution list.

Laura Jaworski distributed the Oversight Committee's meeting schedule for 2005. Laura noted that the meetings will still be held at the Department of Administration, but in Conference Room C for the remainder of the year.

Upcoming Meetings

Rules and Standards Subcommittee

April 12th, 2005 at 2:30 at Bernadette Building, 15 Fleming Rd., Cranston DOC.

Review Subcommittee

May 17th, 2005 at 2:30 at Bernadette Building, 15 Fleming Rd., Cranston DOC.

DV Critical Case Review Team

May 24th, 2005 at 2:00 in Pinel Building, 2nd Floor, RIDOC Cranston.

Oversight Committee

MONDAY, June 6th, at 2:00 at DOA, Conference Room C

Meeting Adjourned

Beatriz Perez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chief LaCross seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Jaworski, Project Services Coordinator

Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee