

**BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

Meeting of October 6, 2008

Open session

Minutes Draft

Voting Members Present (7): Shelley Cortese, RI Department of Corrections/Chair; Stephen King, RI Supreme Court/Co-Chair; Deb DeBare, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Elaine Dorazio, Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit; Joseph Ben, Justice Assistance; Judge Elaine Bucci, RI District Court; Ed Degnan, Kent House/BIPs Representative.

Seats Not Represented (7): Governor's Office; RI Justice Commission; Urban League; RI Police Chiefs Association; Office of the Attorney General; RI Department of Health.

Additional Participants (6): Sisan Smallman; Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole/BIPSOC; George Sheehan, RI-BIP; Jeff Weisinger, Tri-Hab; Bryan Riley, FVI; Lional Fernandez, MAP BIP; Martina Romero, MAP BIP; Sharon Vanderhoff, Probation & Parole; Sage Bauer, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda: October 6,2008

Meeting Minutes: August 4,2008

Summary Comprehensive Re-Certification: MAP BIP

Materials Made Available:

MAP BIP Application for Comprehensive Certification*

Tri-Hab Application for Renewed Comprehensive Certification*

***for review only; in accordance with the Rules of Practice & Procedures**

Shelley Cortese, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:10pm and noted that a voting quorum had been met.

Review of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of June 2, 2008 were reviewed and adopted.

Deb DeBare made a motion to adopt the August 4, 2008 minutes. Judge Bucci seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed. Motion carried.

Review Subcommittee Report

Emily reported the review process for MAP BIP Comprehensive Certification is complete; a copy of the summary was distributed. Emily reviewed the summary including MAP BIP submission of enrollment notification forms and Spanish language handouts. Emily made note of the cohesive group process witnessed by reviewers, Emily Daniels and Micheline Lombardi. The Review Subcommittee is asking for a vote granting MAP BIP Comprehensive Certification.

Deb DeBare made a motion to grant Comprehensive Certification to MAP BIP. Steve King seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; Ed Degnan abstained. Motion carried.

Shelley reported Tri-Hab BIP Director Jeff Weisinger has outstanding training hours to be submitted to the Review Subcommittee. Shelley stated Jeff submitted an outline of how he will come into compliance with the training prior to the August fourth Oversight Committee meeting. Shelley stated the Review Subcommittee had discussed two options for presentation to the Oversight Committee: the first; holding a vote to grant Renewed Comprehensive Certification to Tri-Hab with Jeff to submit outstanding hours to Emily by the

December first meeting date. If the vote to grant Renewed Comprehensive Certification was held today there would not be a need for the December first meeting although Tri-Hab would still be held to that date as a deadline for submitting training hours. The second option is to hold a vote to grant an extension of Comprehensive Certification to Tri-Hab and hold the December first meeting for the sole purpose of a vote to grant Renewed Comprehensive Certification to Tri-Hab. Jeff stated the training hours will be completed by December first. Judge Bucci asked why the hours had not been completed as Jeff was aware Tri-Hab would be under review for Certification. Jeff stated training hours were difficult to complete due to a lack of agency money for training fees and staff compensation for their time. Deb stated RICADV would hold in house trainings for Tri-Hab, with enough attendees, and this may be more cost effective than each facilitator paying individual fees for a training held by the RICADV. Emily reported the outstanding training hours were for two employees with facilitator trainee status and Jeff. The seasoned facilitators employed by Tri-Hab have met the training requirements. Steve stated three possible votes for today's meeting: to grant Tri-Hab Renewed Comprehensive Certification with the contingency training hours are completed and submitted by December first; to vote to deny Tri-Hab Renewed Comprehensive Certification; or vote to grant an extension of Comprehensive Certification until December first. Judge Bucci stated she would be most comfortable with a vote to grant an extension of Comprehensive Certification. Steve stated that the issues needing to be addressed

do not pose any community or victim safety concerns therefore a vote to grant Renewed Comprehensive Certification with a contingency falls within the Oversight Committee's rules of practice and procedure. Judge Bucci stated she would be against voting for Renewed Comprehensive Certification for Tri-Hab at this meeting. Deb stated she would support granting an extension of Comprehensive Certification.

Steve King made a motion to grant an extension of Comprehensive Certification to Tri-Hab until the BIPSOC meeting on 12-1-2008, with the required training hours to be submitted prior to the meeting. Elaine Dorazio seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; Ed Degnan abstained. Motion carried.

Emily reported Rhode Island Batterers Intervention Program (RI-BIP) is the next provider to be reviewed for Renewed Comprehensive Certification.

Shelley reported Kent Center is no longer offering a batterer's intervention group. Emily reported she has spoken with Paula Trice of Kent Center who stated Fay Baker, Kent Center program director, would send a written notification to the Oversight Committee regarding Kent Center's decision to no longer offer a batterer's intervention group.

Member Issues/Announcements

Shelley asked if there had been any progress regarding a meeting of the directors of programs as discussed at the August fourth meeting. Bryan stated he was under the impression Dr. Kathy Carty of Vantage Point was going to make contact regarding going forward with a meeting and as of today's meeting he had not heard from her. Both Jeff and Bryan stated they would like the directors to meet outside of the Oversight Committee meeting to discuss program issues.

Shelley inquired the status of non-agency referrals to programs. Bryan reported since FVI stopped taking clients that were not referred by Probation or Justice Assistance calls regarding non-referral agency clients have stopped. George reported RI-BIP no longer receives calls from the public defender's office but still receives calls from pre-trial services unit. George stated RI-BIP now requires self referrals to pay half the program fee before the client starts and the remaining half of the fee at week ten(midway through the program) since requiring this George reports more self referrals complete the programs twenty weeks. Jeff reported Tri-Hab receives calls from the pre-trial services unit for anger management counseling referrals.

Shelley stated members of the Review Subcommittee discussed safety of the facilitators during and after group sessions based on observations made during the review process.

Shelley stated the Review Subcommittee had inquired if there are safety procedures in place. Jeff reported Tri-Hab provides phones in

each group meeting room and code words are utilized when a facilitator needs assistance. Bryan reported FVI has a policy to end the group session if a client has been asked to exit and refuses. Bryan stated FVI also has telephones in each group meeting room if a facilitator were to need to call the police. Bryan stated facilitators have commonly used only their first name to limit the chances of client contacting a facilitator outside of group and facilitators have also had group members accompany them to their car if they felt an ousted member would be waiting after group had finished.

Shelley asked if it would be valuable for programs to notify police departments of the group's presence. George stated that may bring increased scrutiny to the members of the group, police may use the information as an opportunity to "check up" on offenders and even arrest them for violations or warrants. Bryan stated he believes police notification of the group's presence is not necessary as the group itself provides protection for a facilitator because the group does not want an altercation and they also become protective of facilitators as the process progresses.

Bryan reports he is unsure of how to contend with clients who report no income. Bryan stated the clients are suitable for the group they are just unable to pay due to having no means of income. Emily stated as a Probation officer she refers the Probationer to a group and has them attend the scheduled intake and meeting whether or not they have the money to show an effort to comply with the condition of

BIP. Emily stated she has also sent clients to programs that only require community service in lieu of monetary payment and requires them to show proof of the community service as well as check in with the program until the Probationer is able to pay the enrollment fee. Bryan asked what to do if the client is never able to pay even the intake fee. Lionel stated he believes the problem is only worsening. Deb stated when the advocacy groups had no funding they collaborated with one another to apply for grant funding. Would the programs be willing to work together in that way? Are the programs aware of any moneys available to agencies who provide services to offenders? Sharon stated the employment rate in Pawtucket is extremely high and worsening, but she believes there is some money because her Probationers are spending money on cigarettes, cell phones, cable television, etc. Judge Bucci stated Probation needs to substantiate a Probationer's ability to pay in order to violate based on dismissal from a program for lack of payment. Judge Bucci stated if programs offered community service as the only alternative to monetary payment they may find many people would rather pay than perform the community service. Shelley said there must be a collaborative effort between referral agencies and programs.

Upcoming Meetings

Review Subcommittee:

November 21, 2008 at 2:00pm in Bernadette Building

DV Critical Cases Review Team:

TBA

Oversight Committee:

December 1, 2008 at 2:00pm in Bernadette Building, 15 Fleming Rd., Cranston DOC.

Meeting Adjourned

Deb DeBare made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Judge Bucci seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed; no abstentions. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole Officer

Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee