

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Meeting of February 2, 2009

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; Beatriz Perez, RI Department of Health.

Seats Not Represented (5): Governor's Office; RI Justice Commission; Urban League; RI Police Chiefs Association; Office of the Attorney General.

Additional Participants (12): Micheline Lombardi, Probation & Parole Supervisor; Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole/BIPSOC; George Sheehan, RI-BIP; Jeff Weisinger, Tri-Hab; Bryan Riley, FVI; Sandra Santana-Levy, FVI; Mary Osborne, Kent House; Kathy Carty, Vantage Point; Jen Rocha, Vantage Point; Anthony Ward-Smith, Justice Assistance; Judith Willard, Probation & Parole; Sharon Schwartz-Vanderhoff, Probation & Parole; Sage Bauer, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda: February 2, 2009

Meeting Minutes: October 6, 2008

Summary Comprehensive Re-Certification: Tri-Hab

Materials Made Available:

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 October 6, 2008 were reviewed. Dr. Kathy Carty mentioned she never intended to be the lead on coordinating a meeting of BIP directors. Shelley stated the sentence can be removed from the member issue section of the October 6, 2008 meeting minutes.

Deb DeBare made a motion to adopt the October 6, 2008 minutes. Steve King seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed.

Motion carried.

Review Subcommittee Report

The summary for Tri-Hab Renewed Comprehensive Certification was distributed. Shelley asked members to review the summary. Emily stated the outstanding training hours for Jeff Weisinger; Director of Tri-Hab, have been submitted and approved by the Review Subcommittee and there are no outstanding issues. Sandra Santana-Levy asked Jeff if handouts in Spanish are provided to Spanish speaking groups. Jeff stated handouts are provided in Spanish. Emily stated all Spanish language handouts and a Spanish intake packet had been submitted as part of the Renewed Comprehensive Certification application. Steve King asked if the issue of group start time mentioned in the group observation review had been addressed. Reviewers Emily Daniels and Sharon Schawtz-Vanderhoff stated the issue was addressed following the first group observation and correction was observed at all subsequent observations. The Review Subcommittee is asking for a vote granting Tri-Hab Renewed Comprehensive Certification.

Deb DeBare made a motion to grant Renewed Comprehensive Certification to Tri-Hab. Steve King seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none abstained; no objections. Motion carried.

Emily reported Rhode Island Batterers Intervention Program (RI-BIP) has submitted their application for Renewed Comprehensive Certification.

Member Issues/Announcements

Shelley acknowledged the passing of Ed Degnan; Director of Kent House Batterers Intervention Program. Shelley reported his passing leaves the member seat of BIP Representative vacant. Shelley stated RIGL 12-29-5.1 provided a representative of a batterers intervention program to be appointed by the Director of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Deb DeBare stated she would notify the programs of the seat opening, all interested parties can then submit a letter of interest and resume. Deb stated she hoped to have the ability to make a decision before the next Oversight Committee meeting.

Dr. Kathy Carty stated she currently has an issue with an ATR client, court ordered to BIP and substance abuse counseling, living on

Block Island. The client had arraigned to attend BIP at Vantage Point's West Warwick location on Friday evenings and substance abuse counseling on Saturday mornings. The client has now missed sessions and states he would like to attend counseling with private counselors on Block Island. There are currently no certified programs offering domestic violence counseling on Block Island. Jeff stated a private counselor located on Block Island is currently training to be a BIP facilitator through Gateway. When the training is complete and approved by the Review Subcommittee the client may be able to attend private sessions with this individual to fulfill the court order. The issue will require ongoing coordination with the counseling and referring agencies.

Kathy, Jeff and Bryan discussed the exchange of names of people interested in facilitating additional groups. Jeff stated Tri-Hab will be opening additional groups. Bryan and Jeff discussed the number of clients needed before the program would open an additional group. Jeff stated he opens groups with 2 members, Shelley stated it is suggested in the Standards a minimum of 5 members be available to open a group

(Batterers Intervention Program Comprehensive Standards Section 10.8).

Shelley asked if the program directors were planning on having a meeting. Jeff and Bryan stated they are willing to meet. Bryan stated he would coordinate a meeting and discuss a time and date following today's Oversight Committee meeting. Bryan stated he had twice

attempted to hold a meeting of program directors but had been unable to find an agreeable day and time for all interested. Kathy asked why the program directors would meet. Bryan stated the programs have collective issues they could discuss and bring before the Oversight Committee.

Kathy reported Vantage Point does not consistently receive police reports from Probation Officers, she stated approximately 36% of referrals from the Department of Corrections do not come with police reports. Kathy stated this poses an issue for the agency due to the Comprehensive Standards requiring the program to have the report as part of the client file. Kathy stated the police report is a Comprehensive Standards requirement and lack of the report could pose a safety issue with regard to having knowledge of the offender's crime and history of violence. Shelley stated the practice of forwarding police reports with domestic violence referrals had been discussed extensively at several Supervisors meetings and Kathy needs to contact the regional Supervisor of Probation Officers who are not sending police reports. Kathy stated she did not feel comfortable doing this because she did not want to "throw people under the bus." Shelley stated knowledge would not be used for a punitive purpose, the issue is a training issue regarding common practice and would be used to direct a Probation Officer in common practice or if found to be a common issue to hold a training on the referral processes. Shelley inquired if other directors had a issue with not receiving police reports or contacting Supervisors to receive

reports. Jeff stated he contacts the Probation Officer directly for a police report and Supervisors when he has been unable to obtain a report from the Probation Officer. Jeff stated he believes the police report is important for offender accountability. Jeff stated he has not had any resulting issues from contacting Probation Officers or their Supervisors. Shelley stated if any issues arise from contacting either Probation Officers or their Supervisors to contact her directly. Sharon Schawtz-Vanderhoff stated she contacts the program directly if she has additional information regarding the offender actions during the incident or criminal history because police reports do not always include incident information or witness statements. Some police reports are only a narrative on the offender arrest from a domestic abuse warrant. Jeff reported he has been contacted directly by Sharon, Emily and other Probation Officers with additional offender information in certain circumstances. Kathy stated she has a very good rapport regarding exchange of information with Judith Willard in Kent County.

Upcoming Meetings

Shelley announced the next Review Subcommittee meeting will be held on March 24, 2009. Sage Bauer announced the next Critical Case Review meeting will be held on March 17, 2009; additional Critical Case Review meeting will be scheduled for the 3rd Tuesday of every other month, Sage will be emailing a schedule to Oversight Committee members and Probation Officers.

Review Subcommittee:

March 24, 2009 at 2:00pm in Bernadette Building

DV Critical Cases Review Team:

March 17, 2009 at 2:00pm at RICADV

Oversight Committee:

April 6, 2009 at 2:00pm in Bernadette Building, 15 Fleming Rd., Cranston DOC.

Meeting Adjourned

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

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole Officer

Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee