

BATTERERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM STANDARDS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Meeting of April 6, 2009

Open session

Minutes Draft

Voting Members Present (6): Shelley Cortese, RI Department of Corrections/Chair; Stephen King, RI Supreme Court/Co-Chair; Deb DeBare, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Joseph Ben, Justice Assistance; Judge Elaine Bucci, RI District Court; Mary Osborne, BIP Representative.

Seats Not Represented (7): Supreme Court Domestic Violence Training & Monitoring Unit; RI Department of Health; Governor's Office; RI Justice Commission; Urban League; RI Police Chiefs Association; Office of the Attorney General.

Additional Participants (12): Richard Delfino, Probation & Parole Assistant Administrator; Donna Broccoli, Department of Corrections; Micheline Lombardi, Probation & Parole Supervisor; Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole/BIPSOC; George Sheehan, RI-BIP; Bryan Riley, FVI; Sandra Santana-Levy, FVI; Kathy Carty, Vantage Point; Sharon Schwartz-Vanderhoff, Probation & Parole; Sage Bauer, RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Tina Romero, MAP; Paula Trice, MAP.

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda: April 6, 2009

Meeting Minutes: February 2, 2009

Summary Comprehensive Re-Certification: Rhode Island Batterers Intervention Program (RI-BIP)

Comprehensive Standards-Section 7.6

Vantage Point letter to the Oversight Committee

Department of Corrections letter to Vantage Point

Materials Made Available:

RI-BIP 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 February 2, 2009 were reviewed.

Steve King made a motion to adopt the February 2, 2009 minutes. Deb DeBare seconded the motion. All votes in favor; none opposed. Motion carried.

Review Subcommittee Report

The summary for Rhode Island Batterers Intervention Program (RI-BIP) Renewed Comprehensive Certification was distributed. Shelley asked members to review the summary. Shelley stated reviewers Steve King, Sage Bauer, Micheline Lombardi and Emily Daniels were present to offer their observations and answer any questions arising from the summary. Shelley stated the Review Subcommittee is recommending a vote for Renewed Comprehensive Certification for RI-BIP. Emily reported on the issues clarified at the April 1, 2009 meeting with RI-BIP director George Sheehan. Emily began by reviewing the submission of all but four facilitator supplemental qualification forms: George Sheehan, Avelina Rocchio, Albert Faella, and Linda Hurley. Emily stated all submitted forms met all training requirements and the outstanding forms were to be submitted upon RI-BIP's receipt of certificates from a training attended on April 2nd and 3rd. Emily reported the curriculum of the training had been reviewed and approved as appropriate to fulfill training requirements under the Comprehensive Standards. Emily

then discussed the use of breaks and the potential for cumulative loss of time when facilitators allow long breaks as well as ending group prior to the scheduled time. Emily reported observers of different groups on several occasions made note on facilitator inconsistencies in challenging and confronting inappropriate comments by group members. Emily stated George indicated these issues would be discussed with individual facilitators during their weekly supervision. Steve reported he observed a positive and engaging group dynamic in Providence and believes the facilitator to have a good and productive rapport with the group members. Steve stated the facilitator modeled respect when referencing significant others as 'partner' but he was not consistent in holding group members to the same standard of respect when they referenced current and past relationships. Bryan Riley asked if the Comprehensive Standards specify each instance of inappropriate reference be confronted by the facilitator. Shelley stated the Standards are not specific on each and every instance being confronted but the Standards do state facilitators are to confront and challenge group members and there is an expectation this will be done consistently. Steve stated it is not feasible to expect facilitators to do this 100% of the time but that it is expected to be done appropriately and consistently. Steve also stated inconsistency by facilitators in confronting group members has not been brought to light in other program reviews so there was a pattern here that warranted it is addressed with the program. Bryan stated confronting each inappropriate comment by a group member would not be good

group practice and would hinder the group process. Emily stated it is expected the practice will happen more often than not and it is being brought to the attention of the program because this was not the case. Emily reported this issue was discussed with the program facilitator and George indicated it would be addressed during individual supervision. Shelley asked if there is motion to approve Renewed Comprehensive Certification for RI-BIP.

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

Member Issues/Announcements

Shelley reported a selection for appointee and alternate representative of a Batterers Intervention Program has been made by the Director of the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Deb DeBare reported she notified the programs of the seat opening, and received letters of interest. After reviewing the letters and resumes submitted Deb reported the selection of Mary Osborne of Kent House as appointee and Bryan Riley of FVI as alternate representative of Batterers Intervention Programs to the Oversight Committee.

Shelley reported she is in receipt of a letter from Dr. Kathy Carty director of Vantage Point, Inc. addressed to herself and members of the Oversight Committee. A copy of the letter was distributed for review. Shelley stated due to her dual role as Assistant Administrator

of Probation & Parole and Chair of the Batterers Intervention Oversight Committee Richard DeFino is present at today's meeting as representative of the Department of Probation & Parole. Shelley reported the letter had been presented to the Department's legal counsel and a response was sent to Dr. Carty. A copy of the Department response letter was distributed for review. Dr. Carty noted she had just received the response letter this morning. Dr. Carty stated she believed a response from the Department of Corrections legal department was an extreme response to her letter inquiring guidance from the Oversight Committee. Shelley stated the letter was brought to the legal department because the letter implied the responsibility of Probation & Parole in the safety of Vantage Point employees. The letter implied the lack of consistency in Probation & Parole Officers providing police reports to the agency jeopardized public safety and as Assistant Administrator of Probation & Parole Shelley was obligated to bring this matter to the attention of the Department's legal counsel. Dr. Carty stated she had not received police reports on clients and/or notification of the clients' status as registered sex offenders. Micheline Lombardi stated the only police report that would be sent to any program would be the report of the incident leading to the court ordered BIP and that many offenders have previous violent, both sex and non-sex related, criminal histories that would not be included in the pertinent report or even readily available to the Probation or Parole Officer. Richard DeFino provides oversight for the Sex Offender Specific Probation & Parole Officers and asked Dr. Carty to contact him after the meeting and

provide the names of the offenders referred without police reports or notification of sex offender status so that he may contact the respective Officer. Dr. Carty stated she did not want to “throw anyone under the bus”. Shelley stated the information would not be used by the Department in a disciplinary fashion but as a training opportunity. Shelley noted that with new staff and staff movement not all Officers are aware of the common practice to forward a police narrative with a referral to BIP. Identifying the number of Officers needing this guidance would allow the training committee to provide a training regarding agency referrals. Dr. Carty stated her staff was now contacting police departments directly to obtain reports and offender criminal history. Shelley noted the Comprehensive Standards put the onus to obtain a police report on the Intervention Program and that it has been a common practice and courtesy of the referring Probation or Parole Officer to forward a police report when available. The Department will continue this practice but that the forwarding of police reports is and has always been to assist in offender accountability and not to assist in an Intervention Program’s responsibility to provide a safe environment to their employees. Dr. Carty stated she felt the legal response to her request for guidance from the committee was extreme; she had simply wanted to inquire on how to address the issue of not receiving police reports with referrals. Shelley stated the issue had been brought to light in a previous Oversight Committee meeting and at that time she had offered herself available to address individual circumstances as they arise and had she been contacted as Assistant Administrator to

Probation & Parole the matter would not have been brought to legal counsel but because the letter was addressed to her in her capacity as Chair of the Oversight Committee as well as all members of the Oversight Committee and the letter expressly stated that by not providing police reports the department showed a lack of consideration for public safety the matter had to be brought to the attention of the Department's legal council. Dr. Carty stated she would not bring any further requests for guidance before the Oversight Committee. Steve King stated that was not the necessary or intent of this discussion; the letter from Vantage Point had allowed for the issue of jurisdiction of the Oversight Committee to be discussed and be brought to all members and attendees attention matters regarding Probation & Parole should be brought to the attention of either Richard DeFino or Shelley Cortese in their capacity as Assistant Administrators to Probation & Parole and not to Shelley as Chair of the Oversight Committee as the Oversight Committee and its members have no authority over the standard operating procedure of the Probation & Parole Department.

Upcoming Meetings

Shelley announced the next Review Subcommittee meeting will be held on June 23, 2009. The next Critical Case Review meeting has yet to be scheduled and will be announced. The next Oversight Committee meeting will be held on June 1, 2009. Judge Bucci informed the Committee she will be unable to attend the June 1st

meeting.

Review Subcommittee:

June 23, 2009 at 2:00pm in Bernadette Building

DV Critical Cases Review Team:

TBA

Oversight Committee:

**June 1, 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 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Daniels, Probation & Parole Officer

Batterers Intervention Program Standards Oversight Committee